THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

BY

REV. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

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TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
DWIGHT LYMAN MOODY
AT WHOSE EXPRESS DESIRE
THESE STUDIES WERE WRITTEN AND WHO
SO PERFECTLY UNDERSTOOD AND
SO GRACIOUSLY REVEALED IN LIFE AND SERVICE
THE TRUTH THAT WITH GOD
LAW IS THE EXPRESSION OF LOVE

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The Ten Commandments.

INTRODUCTORY.

"And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."—DEUT. VIII. 3.

". . . So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—ISAIAH LV. 11.

". . . Jesus answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—MATT. IV. 4.

These three passages are linked together by the common thought that human life is perfectly conditioned when it is governed by the words that proceed from the mouth of God.

Deuteronomy records the last messages of Moses to the children of Israel. In this particular passage he states the meaning of the varied circumstances through which God has permitted them to pass. "He humbled thee, suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna." To what purpose? "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but

by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

Isaiah is the messenger of God to a people, who, through disobedience, have passed into captivity. Chapter lv. records one of the messages in which he contrasts their state of life in captivity with the blessedness and joy experienced when living in perpetual obedience to Divine law. It is of this law he speaks when he says, "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth."

In the New Testament we see Jesus, God's perfect man, passing through the severest temptation. Replying to the first suggestion of the enemy, He reveals the realm in which He lives when He says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Let the passages which indicate the common thought be lifted from their setting.

i. "Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

ii. "My word that goeth forth out of My mouth."

iii. "Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Thus is revealed the supreme verity upon which the Mosaic, Prophetic, and Christian economies were based. The methods have been different and progressive; the purpose has been ever the same. The creation of the Hebrew nation, its preservation, and all its magnificent ritual and organization were directed to the end of giving expression to the first divine intention of the blessedness of man, receiving his law

from the mouth of God, and yielding unquestioning obedience to it.

The prophetic office was that of forthtelling this Word of God principally to those who were disobedient. Its exercise was ever characterized by fierce denunciation of rebellion, glowing descriptions of the glory of the Divine Kingship, and passionate appeals to a return to loyalty.

Jesus, the author of Christian faith, lived from beginning to end without deviation or exception by the words proceeding from the mouth of God. In His passion-baptism He bore the penalty of the disobedience of the race, and in His resurrection took again His life, that He might communicate it to sinful men, that in its energy they also might obey the law of God.

Evidently, therefore, according to the consistent teaching of Scripture, man only understands the possibility of his being as he becomes acquainted with the law of God; and only realizes this possibility as he lives by the words proceeding from the mouth of God.

The reason for this is found in the fact that within the Divine intention, every human life moves through present probation to future purpose. Men are born, not merely for to-day, but for God's to-morrow. Issue and consummation are out of sight, and are perfectly known to the Creator alone. The trouble is that so many live as though the whole purpose of life were realized in the little day on earth. Yet men know that it is not so, that this passing life is preparatory and probationary. To-day men sow, to-morrow they reap.

The reaping depends upon the sowing. If the ultimate end is to be in harmony with the will of the eternal love, they must obey the law proceeding from that love: they must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

THE SUPREME DUTY OF MAN.

The supreme duty of every man is that he should discover and obey these words. If he live from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and from year to year without reference to that law, hoping that after being regardless of, if not rebellious against it, he will at last slip into some happy state, then surely he must indeed be blind and foolish.

In the close of the Book of Ecclesiastes, the preacher says, "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole of man" (xii. 13). Not "the whole duty of man," as it was in the Authorized Version, but the "whole of man." That is to say, if a man fear God and keep His commandments, he is a whole man. Judged by this standard, how many there are that are not whole men. This very book of Ecclesiastes reveals the fact. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity." That is the sum total of life lived "under the sun," among things material and transient; life in a hemisphere. The whole man is realized when man "fears God and keeps His commandments." That is, when both hemispheres are recognized. He who lives without reference to the law of God fails to fulfil the possibilities of his own being. He is not a man until

he lives by the words that proceed from the mouth of God.

In the Epistle of James is found a word of deep significance. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all," (ii. 10). Placing this side by side with the passage already referred to in Ecclesiastes, there are two phrases with a common denominator, "the whole": "the whole man," "the whole law." Herein lies the explanation of the apparent severity of James's utterance. Men are apt to think that if there be ten commandments, of which they obey nine, such obedience will be put to their credit, even though they break the tenth. That, however, is to misunderstand God's purpose of perfection for man, and the consequent perfection of His law. The ten words of Sinai were not ten separate commandments, having no reference to each other. They were ten sides of the one law of God. The teaching of Jesus reveals the fact that these commandments are so inter-related that if a man offend in one point he breaks the unity of the law, and, therefore, of his own manhood. It is by "*every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live."

If these positions are established there need be no apology for a frank and honest facing of the Ten Commandments. They were the comprehensive words of God, uttered for the government of a people whose distinctive glory lay in the fact that they were a theocracy, under the immediate Kingship of the Most High, and whose recurring shame lay in their revolt from that

authority. These words embody a perfect law of life for probationary days. They presuppose human failure and sin; and, therefore, they will have no place in the government of God in heaven. Not that man will do the forbidden things there, but the glorified nature of man will have put the committing of such things beyond the realm of possibility. In some measure the Christian dispensation antedates the heavenly state, for its whole genius lies in the fact that newborn souls share by that new birth in the motives and impulses of God.

Man still lives, however, both in his own personality and in his relation to his fellow-man, in perpetual touch with the old nature. The words of God are, therefore, of perpetual importance and value. He needs to be solemnly reminded that the law of the spirit of life in Christ sets him free from the law of sin and death, but not from the law of God. Every word of the Decalogue is repeated with emphasis and new power in the Christian economy.

In the series of studies now beginning it is proposed to consider the essential law contained in the ten words of the Decalogue, in every case endeavoring to trace the enforcement and emphasis of that law in the light of the Christian dispensation.

The severity of the law of God is the necessary sequence of His infinite love. The Eternal Heart purposes and seeks the ultimate perfection of every human being. To condone sin in any way, or excuse it would be to make impossible the realization of that pur-

pose. There is infinite significance in the opening words of the Swan Song of Moses, the lawgiver:

The Lord came from Sinai,
And rose from Seir unto them,
He shined forth from mount Paran.
And He came from the ten thousands of holy ones:
At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.
Yet, He loveth the peoples;
All His saints are in Thy hand:
And they sat down at Thy feet;
Everyone shall receive Thy words.

DEUT. XXXIII. 2, 3.

The fiery law is the most perfect expression of His love for the peoples. Let men then with reverent sincerity stand in the light of His law, that they may understand the perfection of His love.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt have none other gods before Me."—Exodus xx. 3.

Of the ten words of Sinai the first four deal with man's relation to God. Of these the first brings us face to face with *the object of worship:* "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." The second reveals *the true mode of worship:* "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above." The order of worship is to be spiritual, not material. The third states that *this relation of man to God—that of worship—is to be a perpetual one,* governing all his life: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." The fourth provides that *a specific seventh of man's time is to be set apart for the express and sole purpose of worshipping God:* "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Having laid the basis of life and character the Decalogue proceeds to deal with *the relations of man to his fellows.* First comes *the family relation:* "Honor thy father and thy mother"; second: "Thou shalt not kill"; third: "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; fourth: "Thou shalt not steal"; and fifth: "Thou shalt

not bear false witness against thy neighbor." The remaining one is also of a moral nature, but shows that the heart of man is to be jealously guarded against wrong desire: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house," and so forth.

The subject of the present chapter is the first commandment, "I am the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." These are simple words, but their majesty would thrill, if it were fully appreciated.

THE NAME OF GOD.

There is deep significance in the name by which God here declares Himself, JEHOVAH. It is a combination of three Hebrew words, which may be translated into an English form thus: Yehi, "He will be," Hove, "being," and Hahyah, " He was." A combination is made from the three words by taking the first syllable of the first YEHi, the middle syllable of the second, hOVe, and the last syllable of the third, hahyAH, so that we have the name YEHOVAH. The whole name means, "He that will be, He that is, He that was." Thus the very name brings man into the presence of the Supreme, the Eternal, the Self-existent God, Who is because He is—a great and perpetual mystery to the finite mind of man, and for the most part beyond all human analysis. If the mind reach out to the limitless stretches of future generations, God says, "I am He that will be." If men think of the present moment, with all its marvelous manifestations of life and order and mystery and revela-

tion, God says, "I am He that is." If the mind be carried as far back as possible into infinite spaces of the past God says, "I am He that was."

Whether man thinks of his origin, of his present condition, or of his future destiny, God says, "I AM"; and man cannot escape the great revelation of God which is put into the word, "I am JEHOVAH."*

Such is the statement that leads up to the first law. But God says more, "I am Jehovah, *thy God.*" The word *God* here is *Elohim,* the plural of the word *Eloah,* meaning the supreme object of worship. God faces man, saying, "I am Jehovah, thy God—He that will be, He that is, He that was, the supreme object of worship." Upon that is based the commandment; and to take it without that definition of the Person of God

*This interpretation of the meaning of the word Jehovah has been severely criticised, and among other things has been designated "elaborated absurdity." The interpretation is that of the late Mr. Thomas Newberry, the author of the Englishman's Bible, a Hebraist of conspicuous ability. Of course it is a personal *conclusion* by one who interprets the Old Testament in the light of the New. The original Hebrew form YHVH left open the question of the vowels. The generally accepted idea that the word Jehovah is a hybrid of the combination of the vowels of ADONAI and YHVH is also a *conclusion* arrived at, and cannot be fairly stated to be a certainty. In correspondence with Mr. Newberry on the point, after the criticisms referred to, he said in a letter to me: "The explanation of the Divine title Jehovah is given as a simple statement of facts on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. In Rev. i. 4, the Holy Ghost has so interpreted its meaning." This may appear to some to be "elaborated absurdity." There are others of us who look upon it as sound and spiritual exposition.

is to rob it of its great force. "I am Jehovah thy God. . . . Thou shalt have none other Gods before Me."

I.—*The Meaning of the Commandment.*

If God is what he claim to be—He that will be, He that is, He that was—then He must be the supreme object of worship. If it be true that He is Jehovah, man's God—then the commandment is a reasonable one, and it must be a very unreasonable thing to have any other God beside Him. In the very necessity of the case, if the word spoken by God be true, then God is sufficient, and God *is God.* There cannot be two who fulfil that description of limitless life. Point to another god, and he must be limited. That becomes an impertinence and a sham to a man who has had a vision of the true God. Therefore it is based upon the necessity of the case—upon the most absolute reasonableness—that God first declares Himself and His glory, and then utters the first great word, "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me."

Every man needs a god. There is no man who has not, somewhere in his heart, in his life, in the essentials of his being, a shrine in which is a deity whom he worships. It is as impossible for a man to live without having an object of worship as it is for a bird to fly if it is taken out of the air. The very composition of human life, the mystery of man's being, demands a center of worship as a necessity of existence. All life is worship. There may be a false god at the center of the life; but every activity of being, all the energy of life, the devotion of powers—these things

are all worship. The question is whether the life and powers of man are devoted to the worship of the true God or to that of a false one.

There is a center, a motive, a reason, a shrine, a deity somewhere—something which man worships. It has been said that when man dethrones God, he deifies and worships himself. There are men to-day of whom it may be said that they worship themselves with all their heart and with all their strength and with all their mind, and themselves only do they serve. In every case man demands a god, a king, a lawgiver—one who arranges the programme, utters the commandments, and demands obedience.

THE GENESIS OF IDOLATRY.

This incontrovertible fact reveals the genesis of idolatry. The moment a man gets out of touch with God and loses the vision of Him Who says, "I am Jehovah Elohim, the Lord thy God," he puts something else in the place of God. Think of the gods of the heathen, as mentioned in the Bible—Moloch, Baal, and Mammon! The worship of Moloch was the descent of man into the realm of awful cruelty, that of Baal took men through the depths of bestiality and impurity, and that of Mammon debased its devotees to the lust which dreams that power lurks in possession. Moloch, Baal and Mammon were the gods of the heathen; and these are they that men are worshipping until this hour. Although these gods go by other names in this cultured and enlightened twentieth century, yet the world is crowded with idolaters who wor-

ship them. One need not go to Africa, China, or India for specimens—they may be found at home.

In the great cities to-day are hundreds of men who are offering human sacrifices to the Moloch of their lustful cruelty. Such care not how many people die in the struggle, so long as the base cravings of their hearts are satisfied. Great numbers of men worship Baal, the god of beastiality. How true this is, may be shown by the fact that to-night and last night there were 80,000 fallen women on the streets of London. Who keeps them? The worshippers of Baal. Is it realized that all the horrible carrying away of the life of young manhood in this terrible and damnable whirlpool of impurity is worship? It is so. 'Tis the homage of the man who, losing his God, worships at the shrine of a fallen Venus.

Mammon worship is another evil form of devotion which has also survived until this hour. The lust for gold is getting such a hold upon the hearts of men to-day that it is time the first commandment were preached with new emphasis. The worship of the god of gold is cursing the age.

So far generalities have been dealt with, and some men will deny that they worship any of the gods named. There are, however, two other forms of worship mentioned in the Scriptures, one in the Old Testament, and one in the New, worthy of attention. "He taketh up all of them with the angle, he catcheth them in his net, and gathereth them in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad. Therefore he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his drag; be-

cause by them his portion is fat, and his meat plenteous." (Hab. i. 15, 16.)

It is a sad proof of the power of Mammon when a man worships the things that provide him with fatness and with meat. Are there not a great many today who worship their business instead of God? I shall most quickly reach my point by a story.

A boy was bringing home a loaf of bread; and one said:

"What have you there?"

"A loaf."

"Where did you get it?"

"From the baker."

"Where did the baker get it?"

"He made it."

"Of what did he make it?"

"Flour."

"Where did he get the flour?"

"From the miller."

"Where did he get it?"

"From the farmer."

"Where did the farmer get it?"

Then the truth dawned upon the boy's mind, and he replied:

"From God."

"Well, then, from whom did you get that loaf?"

"Oh, from God!"

Here is a boy who, in the last resort, acknowledges God to be the Giver of good.

In this materialistic age, a man says:

"My business supports me and my family."

It is a lie; God supports him and his family. Men deal with God only as a last resource, and yet go on hoping to sneak into God's heaven when they have done with his world; but the God of Sinai is thundering out to this age, "Thou shalt put Me first, and the business second." Men may not sacrifice to the net, nor may they burn incense to the drag.

II.—*The New Testament Enforcement.*

A New Testament picture of idolatry is seen in Philippians iii. 18, 19, "For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is their belly." That is the kind of thing that is too often passed over. How many there are who have just that one god of their animal appetites! "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? How shall we satisfy the cravings of the flesh?- These are their gods. A man of this sort does not burn incense to drag or net; but he has gone down very low, when the things for which he lives and strives, and to which all the glorious possibilities of his manhood are consecrated, consist of eating, drinking, and other forms of merely sensual gratification.

These are but instances of widespread idolatry; but in the presence of it all, God's perpetual message to man is this: "I am Jehovah Elohim; thou shalt have none other gods before Me." If men put Moloch, Baal, Mammon, net, drag, appetites, or aught else, into the place that demands devotion and energy, to

the forgetfulness of God, they are idolators, even though they recite the Creed every Sunday of their life. Man was made for the God Who declares that His creature shall have none other God before Him. He will be the God and the center of every man, and the very nature of man's being makes the demand a reasonable one.

Upon all these commandments the New Testament throws a flood of light, and so far from abrogating them, it emphasizes, reiterates and invests them with new force. There is a sense in which Christians are not "free from the law." It is only when grace enables men to keep the law, that they are free from it; just as a moral man who lives according to the laws of the country is free from arrest. God has not set aside law, but He has found a way by which man can fulfil law, and so be free from it. Has God, in this Christian era, given up His claim to worship, and said that men may have another god? Far from it. New Testament light upon the point may be found in the words of Jesus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. xxii. 37); and again, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (iv. 10).

There is but one excuse for idolatry, namely, ignorance; and there are cases in which even that fails to justify. If a man does not know God, he cannot worship him; but if he lives in a place where God has revealed Himself perfectly, and where he may have the light if he will, then the last excuse for idolatry is

swept away. Take the commandment as applied to God's ancient people. Has it ever been considered how much there was which might have excused idolatry in those days of old? Not only the coming of Jesus, but all the great discoveries of science during the last hundred years, have made idolatry more sinful than ever. In the days when the imagination of the superstitious peopled every wind-storm with demons, when lightnings and thunders were mysteries unsolved and unsolvable, there was some excuse for the man who, in his ignorance of God, became a fire or devil worshipper; but in these days of analyses, when men get to the root of Nature's sights and sounds, finding them to be, after all, not inexplicable and mysterious, but processes and manifestations of a system of rigid law, the excuse for idolatry is gone. Natural phenomena being accounted within the realm of law, man must acknowledge a lawgiver, and every discovery of science within the last fifty years has made God more real to the hearts of men who are looking for Him and are willing to see Him. Every scientific explanation of the mysterious, and of that which savored of witchcraft, makes the sin of worshipping anything in the place of God more heinous. The more brilliant the light of the Divine outshining, the more dark is the sin of idolatry.

Let men take five minutes to shut out everything save the great fact that they stand alone with God. Some are terribly afraid to spend even as much time as that with their own thoughts. If they will, if they

dare, let them ask, as they stand in the light of that first commandment, "What is my god? To what is my life devoted?" If the answer indicates anything that puts God into the background, then in the name of heaven and of their own safety, let them

Break down every idol, cast out every foe,

and let the God Who will be, Who is, Who was, be their God.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands, of them that love Me and keep My commandments."

EXODUS XX. 4, 5, 6.

THE second commandment is by no means a repetition of the first. It forbids a practice which becomes possible only when the One God is believed in and worshipped.

The first forbids us to have any other gods besides the One Who makes Himself known by the name, "I am Jehovah Elohim, the Lord thy God." The second, taking it for granted that there is no god but the one true God, forbids the creation of anything

which is supposed to be a representation of Him, to assist man in worship.

I.—*The Commandment.*

First, let us consider the commandment. Some there are who think that the Puritan fathers imagined that what was forbidden was the making of the likeness of anything in the heavens above or the earth beneath, and so they came to look upon every form of art as idolatrous. I have known Christian folk who, because of this commandment, would not have their photographs taken, and who refused to have a picture in their houses!

This, however, could not have been the Divine intention; for, immediately after the giving of this commandment, among the pattern of things pertaining to the Tabernacle, in the very holiest of all, two images of the cherubim overshadowed the mercy-seat. On the borders of the garment of the High Priest, also, as he went into the Holy Place to minister, there were bells and pomegranates. Man was *not* forbidden to make a representation of anything: he *is* forbidden to use the representation as an aid to worship.

In Westminster Abbey, to-day, there may be seen a great many vacant niches where images once stood. They were removed not because they were statues, but because lamps were burned in front of them, and worshippers knelt before them. That was essentially a violation of this commandment. Man is not to make to himself "a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: *thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve*

them." In the closing words lies the force of the commandment. It strikes at a desire that is very deep-seated in the human heart.

Man declares that he must have something to help him in his worship of God. Devout souls in the Roman Catholic Church avow that they do not worship the image, but the God behind it: that they do not worship the crucifix, but that it helps them to think of the Christ. Yet this is exactly what is forbidden in this commandment. Not that man should not actually worship image or crucifix, but that they should not be used as representations to help in worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." The material cannot help the spiritual.

WHY MAN MAKES IMAGES.

In order to a careful examination of the reason of this commandment let it be considered why man makes an image or a picture to help him in his worship. The answer may be briefly stated—the spiritual sense in man, that which realizes God, is dead. No man who knows God, no man who is living in daily communion with Him, needs a picture to help him to pray. None who know what it is to live and walk with God amid the work of the week would derive help from an image placed in front of them when they worship. By the new birth of the Spirit they have had the spiritual consciousness restored; so that they know God, and are able to commune directly with Him.

If a man crave help, it is thereby proven that he lacks the spiritual consciousness. This very lack ren-

ders him incapable of creating anything which gives a proper representation of God. Every attempt which man has made to represent God in any way has resulted in a false picture of Him. When God said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form; thou shalt not bow thyself unto them nor serve them," it was because he knew that if men, who had lost their sense of Him and His presence, made something to represent Him, it would be a false representation, and men would thereby get false notions of Him, even as they sought to worship.

Look at the matter from another point of view. In the instant that man sets up a representation of any description to help him to realize God, he denies that which is essential in God. Suppose that it is an image, a picture, or some system of worship, concerning which he says, "This is intended as an aid to my worship of the one God." See what he has done! The image, the picture, or the system of worship is limited. The essential fact of God is that He is limitless, that He is eternal, that He is self-existent, there being no end to His being, and no limit to His power. Limitlessness lies at the heart and center of the thought of God, and the moment a man makes an image, he denies the essence of God. For that reason God forbade that there should be the making of any images; for, not only is the image false, it is misleading.

Yet once again. If the image of God that man has made—that which he puts in the place of God, that he may understand Him—if that is false, and if it is limited, what is the effect produced by worship upon

character? "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The thought of God produced by a false representation of God will produce character that is false. There is another scripture which says, concerning idols, "Noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat." Then follows the philosophy of idol-worship: "They that make them are like unto them." Every man is like his god. Man becomes like the thing that he puts in the place of God. If man gets a false notion of God, through his idol or image, he becomes as false as his god. Here then is the tremendous reason for this enactment. It is not a merely capricious commandment; but, like all the commands of God, it is based upon eternal principles. In effect God says to man, "Thou shalt not attempt to liken Me to anything, because every effort of that kind must result in failure, and must react upon man to his abiding injury."

II.—*Present-Day Application.*

Are the men of to-day in danger of breaking this command? Most certainly they are. Consider a few of the ways in which the second commandment is broken. The revival of priestism; the prevalent passion for ritual; the elevation of the ordinances of the Christian religion into undue place and prominence; the professed worship of nature; the worship of humanity, which is becoming a cult and a religion; these are instances. In all these things, men tell us that

they worship God; but they are trying to worship Him through some supposed expression of Him which they have made for themselves.

What is the priest? An attempt to reveal God to the heart, in order that man may worship Him. Wherever a man gives his soul away to the priest, because he imagines that he is getting to know God through the priest, the latter becomes to the man an image and an idol. In every case where this has been done, man's conception of God has suffered, and the result has been the degradation of the worshipper.

That is a statement which is easily made, but for its verification history may be appealed to. Look at the nations of the world which have become priest-ridden, and what has been the result? Take Spain as an instance. What is the meaning of its degradation? Simply that the people have had a false view of God, because they have tried to reach Him through the priest, instead of going directly to Him. The reign of priestism has become one of the most prolific sources of evil. It has broken the second commandment. God says, in the first commandment, "I am your God, worship Me"; He says in the second, "Come directly to Me, and let no supposed help intervene between us." There is to be nothing but direct communication between the soul and God.

The same danger is seen with regard to ritual. An ornate service, beautiful and æsthetic surroundings, are supposed to create the conditions of true worship. What is the result of all this upon the spiritual nature of man? Are the men and women who go over to

ritualism in any form becoming more spiritual? Do their lives manifest the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ, the life of God? Most assuredly not! Ritualism may be refined, but it begins and ends in the senses. When man says he is helped to get nearer to God by merely æsthetic worship, it is nearness to a false deity, not to the true God.

The same principle applies to free church life. One loves the simplicity of worship which is seen when a great congregation comes into the presence of God, and every man and every woman exercises the right of priesthood in His presence. When ornate service is put in the place of the rights of individual souls, men are as great idolaters as were they of olden days, who made graven images or painted pictures, and fell down to worship them.

In the present day, there is a great danger of making the Lord's Supper something more than a simple memorial service; and every such attempt is fraught with peril. Only recently, some men, loved and respected, have given utterance to the statement that the Lord's Supper has in it some sort of mystic element that assists the soul in worship. The soul is assisted just as far as Christ is remembered, as He commanded in the memorial feast spread upon the table, and great risk is run when anything more than that is read into that simple service. The moment some special influence is claimed for the Lord's Supper the ordinance is lifted into the place of the Master, and as soon as that is done all the spiritual verities which lie behind the observance are injured.

Turning from that higher level, remember how much is said to-day about worshipping God through Nature. Let no one undervalue the ministry of Nature. The flowers, the valleys, the hills, the sunshine, the birds are full of beauty, but no man ever reaches God through Nature. Men do get to Nature through the God Who made it. Let a man be right with God, and he will find the mystic key that unlocks all Nature for him; but the men who try to climb to God through Nature never succeed. Man cannot use a flower as a representation of God for worship, without having a God Who is a falsity, and thereby causing suffering to himself.

The new cult of humanitarianism is really an attempt to worship God through human nature; but it is a sorry business. If this new idea of God is expressed in the individual or in the sum-total of the race, let it be remembered that God Himself becomes guilty of all the awful things which have blotted the page of human history—a terrible thought! God is far above humanity, but He loves it, and will redeem it, if it will return to Him. To worship humanity in order to get to God is to be guilty of the self-same sin of putting up as a representation of God something that does not represent Him, but falsifies Him, and reacts in disaster upon the men who worship.

WARNING AND PROMISE.

Notice particularly the solemn warning and the gracious promise linked to the commandment. This is one of those passages of Scripture which are most often and constantly misused. God says, "Thou shalt

not make unto thee a graven image, nor any form that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them :for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments." There are persons who read the first part of that command and pass to the second part, and declare that if a man be impure, God will punish his child on that account. The subject of the result of the sin of a man as manifested in succeeding generations is not now under discussion. What is the simple and plain meaning of these concluding words? If a man put something in the place of his Creator, that iniquity of making a representation of God is visited upon the children of the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. That is to say, if, in worship, men put something in the place of God, if they come under the influence of worship which is an attempt to put something between God and man, then they are not only harming themselves but their children. The probability is that their idea of worship will be transmitted to their children, and their children's idea of worship will be transmitted to their children, so that the wrong that men do themselves when they misrepresent God is a wrong which they are doing to their children likewise. That is the first and simple meaning of the words used in connection with this commandment.

It is a solemn thing thus to pass on to children a wrong conception of God; it is the most awful thing a man can do. Men often take lower ground, and talk about passing to their children evil forces and habits. Nothing can minimize the awfulness of such conduct; but here is the root of it all. When a man puts something, as the object of his worship, in the place of God, he passes on the same practice to his offspring. What a terrible heritage he is thus handing down to the child!

But proceed to notice the gracious promise standing side by side with the warning: "Showing mercy unto thousands." There is very little doubt that the rendering ought to be, "Showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love Me, and keep My commandments." That is to say, that if a man sweeps the idols away, and gets into living connection with God, worshipping Him without anything between, the result will be that his child's child will, most likely, so worship. Here is a remarkable comparison—God visits the iniquity to the third and fourth generation; but He shows mercy unto the thousandth generation! If a man will commit to his posterity a worship which is true, strong, whole-hearted, and pure, and will sweep away all that interferes between himself and God, he is more likely to influence for good the thousandth generation that follows him, than a man of the opposite character is to touch that generation with evil.

Granted that man has but one God, it is still a question of supreme importance how he is worship-

ping Him. If he is doing this through a priest, if he is doing it through ritual, if he is doing it through some creation of his own, he is robbing himself of the essential blessing that comes from true worship.

God calls men into His own presence, to immediate worship. They worship, not when they listen to preaching, not when they are attentive to the form and fashion of music, not when they are thinking of a table upon which the emblems are spread; but when they pass through the preaching, and when they pass beyond the emblems, and when they are face to face with God. Whenever a man stops short of that face-to-face worship of the Eternal God, he is working ruin to his own character, because he is breaking the commandment of God.

Thank God, to-day, no man need stop short. The veil has been rent, the priest has been swept away, ritual has been put out of sight, and there is a direct pathway open from the place where man is into the very presence-chamber of the Eternal God. Without priest, prophet or preacher man can go right into the presence of God and worship Him. And because He has opened the new and living way, every attempt to put something between the soul and God is of the essence of idolatry, against which His face was set in the days of His ancient people Israel, and against which His face is as surely set to-day.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."—EXODUS XX. 7.

THE name of God, in Scripture, is always a revelation. By every title in which God made Himself known to man, He revealed some attribute of the Divine character. The names of the Hebrew people were intended, in every case, as a prayer or a prophecy, and were based upon parental hope. Something like the same principle holds true of the names of God. Men learned some new facts concerning His nature or His methods with each new name or title by which He made Himself known to them. Bearing that in mind, a new gleam of light falls upon this commandment—"Thou shalt not take the *name* of the Lord thy God in vain."

I.—*The Command.*

If men use the name of God, they must use it in a way which is true to its meaning and intentions; and any use of the name of God which denies these, and the character of God thereby revealed, breaks this commandment.

Turn to Isaiah xlviii. 1: "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness." That is the supreme form of breaking this command-

ment; swearing by the name of the Lord, but not in truth; making mention of the God of Israel, but not in righteousness. These people used the name of God, but did not obey the revelation contained therein, and so violated the third commandment.

In Matt. vii. 22, 23, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, and by Thy name cast out devils, and by Thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Here, again, are people using the name to prophesy, using the name to cast out devils, using the name to do mighty works; but they themselves are unknown to the King. That is a subtle form of the profanity against which this commandment utters its warning. A man takes the name of God in vain when he does not use it in the way that God intended it should be used, when he himself is not true to the revelation of God that the name makes.

"The Lord will not hold him guiltless"—the Hebrew word there is clean—"the Lord will not hold him to be clean that taketh His name in vain." This is a solemn assertion. The test of moral cleanliness is the attitude of a man to the name of God. He is clean or unclean as he uses the name of God in truth or for vanity. So that the man who never uses the name of God at all, the man who, through sincerity of questioning doubt, has dropped the name of God out of his vocabulary, has a great deal better chance of being clean than the man who is always talking about God, but is all the time denying Him in his life. This

is, indeed, a very searching test. God says a man's relation to His name is the proof of what that man is, in the fibre of his being, as to cleanness or uncleanness.

How wonderfully the Lord's Prayer throws light upon this subject! Of course, by the Lord's Prayer is intended that which is commonly so called, the prayer which He gave as a pattern to His disciples. It would be well to examine this prayer in its true proportion; for repetition seems to have robbed it of half its real beauty. Notice its opening petition, Matt. vi. 9, 10: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." That is most probably a false punctuation. As a matter of fact, after the invocation, "Our Father which art in heaven"—the approach of the soul to God—there are three petitions, all linked together like a triptych, and then a sentence following which conditions the three, and not the one only.

Our Father which art in heaven,
Thy name be hallowed,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so on earth.

The phrase, "As in heaven, so on earth," has reference, not merely to "Thy will be done," but to "Thy kingdom come," and to "Hallowed be Thy name." These thoughts in the Lord's Prayer—the hallowing of the name, the coming of the kingdom, the doing of the will—are different phases of the same thing, for a man hallows the name by submission to the king-

dom, and by doing the will. Hallowing the name is not simply holding it in reverence.

One of the names by which God is known is that of King, and men hallow the name of King when they submit to God's kingship. Another name is that of Father, and they hallow the name of Father when they do the will of their Father, which is in heaven, as Jesus did.

II.—*Present-Day Application.*

Men to-day are breaking this commandment in three ways—by profanity, frivolity, and hypocrisy.

The sin of profane swearing prevails to this moment, and there is no more insidious habit. It is very often the sin of thoughtlessness.

> Evil is wrought by want of thought,
> As well as want of heart.

Some men do not know when they *do* swear; they were born in the midst of the most fetid moral atmosphere, and began to talk in blasphemy from their earliest days. That is a very terrible thing; but such men are not nearly so guilty as others who have been brought up in a pure moral atmosphere, and have, nevertheless, fallen into the habit.

Much would be gained if men would think of what they are doing in profane swearing, especially where the name of God is involved. An expression made use of with terrible frequency is "God damn you." A man is annoyed in some way by another, and gives ready tongue to this oath. It is taking God's name in

vain, because the man who says it does not mean it. There is not a man who says it who would like to see it carried out with respect to his fellow-man in all its terrible meaning. It is trifling with the name of God, invoking Him to do something which it is never intended He shall do. That is not the most shocking aspect of the vain use of the name of God in that particular expression, for men are not only asking God to do something which they do not wish Him to do, but to do something that He never does. God never damned a man. The idea is an awful heresy. God's work is the work of salvation, and if a man is lost it is the man's own suicidal act. God is not casting men away into eternal loss. The awful passing out into utter darkness of the man who is without God, and who is therefore lost, is the man's own fault. No man goes into that darkness except by his own act. God is not doing it. The idea that He damns men is being thrust into the minds of men by their own profanity of language, and it is a libel upon the love of God and upon all the excellencies of His character. The false idea involved in the profane phrase already mentioned takes its effect upon those who hear it as regards their thought of God, and this effect is demoralizing and debasing. Oh, that every man who has fallen into the habit of profane swearing, having become its slave almost unconsciously, would take heed to the words of Sinai, thundering in our ears to-day, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"!

Another form of taking God's name in vain obtains in some sections of society. This is a light and frivo-

lous use of the holy name, a prevalent and fashionable joking about God. Stories are told in which the name of God is made use of in such a way as to affect men with a false humor. Such tales should be shunned as men would shun the fire of hell. In every instance where men permit themselves to look at sacred things in a frivolous light, there is evil reaction upon the heart and consciousness; they are robbing themselves of that sacred sense of veneration and reverence for God, without which there is no real worship and no acceptable service. That man is unclean through and through who has lost his veneration for God and His holy, sacred name. The man who does not tremble in the presence of God, though he trusts while he trembles, never worships and never works as he ought to do.

The last and most subtle form of breaking the third commandment is committed by the man who says, "Lord, Lord," and does not the things that the Lord says. Prayer without practice is blasphemy; praise without adoration violates the third commandment; giving without disinterestedness robs the benevolence of God of its lustre and beauty. Let these thoughts be stated in other words. The profanity of the church is infinitely worse than the profanity of the street; the blasphemy of the sanctuary is a far more insidious form of evil than the blasphemy of the slum. Is there a blasphemy of the church and the sanctuary? The prayer that is denied by the life, the praise offered to God which is counteracted by rebellion against Him when the hour of that praise has passed away, *that* is

blasphemy, *that* is taking the name of God in vain. If a man passes into the sanctuary and preaches and prays and praises with eloquent lips and beautiful sentences and devotional attitude, even with tears, and goes home to break the least of these commandments, that man blasphemes when he prays; but if he deceives the world, he never deceives God! If a man take the name of God for vanity, if truth is not behind his worship, he had better not worship at all. The form in which this third commandment is broken most completely, most awfully, most terribly, is by perpetually making use of the name of the Lord, while the life does not square with the profession that is made. There are men who, if told that they were profane swearers, would be terribly shocked. They have never allowed an oath to cross their lips in their lives, nor do they know what it is to make use of profane or vulgar language, and they make their boast in their freedom from these things. Yet these men are breaking the third commandment more often and more terribly than the most profane swearer.

Not only is it a more awful thing than actual swearing to take the name of God upon the lips, if a man is not true to his profession, but his example is far more pernicious to religion than is that of the swearer. The man who professes with his lips to honor God, and yet denies Him in his life, will do far more to hinder the coming of the Kingdom than the man who openly blasphemes and makes no profession of honoring God. The most subtle and awful form of breaking the third

commandment of which any man can be guilty is that of hypocrisy.

And what is the last name, the name into which in the smallest syllables and sweetest sound God has compressed most of His heart, most of His power, most of His love? Go back again to that message delivered of old, and hear it there, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."

Here is a man who takes the name of Jesus, and sings about it, but is not saved from his sins. That man is breaking the third commandment.

A man imagines that the religion of Jesus is a cult. He admires Christ, talks about His teachings, criticises His conduct, and patronizes all that He said and did, but he is not saved from sin. The man is a blasphemer. Unless the last name, the name of Jesus, gathering into itself all human beauty and all Divine attributes—unless, as it is used, it is the keynote of the soul, the talisman of deliverance from evil—then had the name better never be mentioned, for so it is taken in vanity. May it be to all more than that, and may they be able to say of that name—

> Jesus the prisoners' fetters breaks,
> Bruises the serpent's head;
> Power into strengthless souls He speaks,
> And life into the dead.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. —Exodus xx. 8-11.

This fourth word of the Decalogue closes its first section. That section deals with man in his relation to God. Having stated the fact of the Deity, and urged the claims of God on man in the first three, and before passing to the second half of the law which deals with man in relation to men, the present command is given. It provides for the perpetual maintenance of a symbol of the relationship that exists between God and man. At regular intervals through all the days, man is to turn wholly from that which is material to that which is spiritual. By the recurrence of the Sabbath, he is to be reminded that every day is measured and planned in the counsels of God. By turning from the activities of his physical being, in order that his spiritual nature may, without distraction, take hold upon spiritual verities, the fact is to be kept in his memory that his whole being is of God, and its well-being conditioned in His government.

In every hour of human life the physical and the spiritual interact upon each other, and in their proper inter-relation each contributes to the strengthening of

the other. Of this fundamental law of human nature the Sabbath is the perpetual symbol. For the days of earthly probation the value of the Sabbath is created by the intervening days, the light of the seventh is a perpetual suggestion of their true meaning and final import. The right understanding of this relation is all-important to a true conception of the meaning and method of the fourth commandment.

Consider, then, first, the two-fold command; and, secondly, its application to our own day.

I.—*The Command.*

This commandment has been spoken of as referring only to the Sabbath. This is a mistake, and the full weight of that part of it which refers to the seventh day is only appreciated as it is remembered that one-half of it has to do with the six days. Stripping the commandment for the moment of all explanatory and expository sentences, it will be found to consist of two simple injunctions:

First, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Second, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work."

The will of God for man is that he should work. It is also that at the seventh day interval he should cease his work, and worship. The work of the six days, being the carrying out of a Divine purpose, is in itself practical worship of the highest description. The worship of the seventh day, in which he turns to the places of contemplation, meditation, and adoration, is work in the highest realm. Each is the com-

plement of the other. He who never works is unfitted for worship. He who never pauses to worship is rendered incapable of work. While the present study, for reasons that will be obvious, deals almost exclusively with the obligation of the Sabbath, it is absolutely necessary to start with a clear understanding that the final statement in the first section of the Decalogue is that man fulfils the ideal relationship to God, contained in the statement of the first three commandments, only as he is a worker and a worshipper.

The reason for this is found in the fact of the kinship of man to God. Every side of his nature is a result of Divine thought and action. It is constructed upon the basis of thought and action. Consequently, the threefold nature of man, resulting in the one person fulfils its highest possibilities within this realm only. The first word of God, therefore, is—"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." The complex system of present-day civilization makes it possible that some men may live without work. That, however, is only possible in the proportion in which men have departed from the Divine ideal. Man is placed in a world which contains all that is necessary for his physical being, but to obtain it he must work. The soil is stored with forces of life, but man must bend over it and smite it with labor before it will answer the demands his need is making upon it. The harvest comes by the way of human work. Man needs bread, and works upon the soil, and the golden harvest is God's crown upon human labor. This fact of labor is not the result of the Fall. It is part of the original

intention, for man was placed in the garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it." In the process of the centuries men have been discovering the secrets of God long locked in the treasury of Nature. These all, rightly understood and applied, minister to the possibilities of increased power to do the work that provides for the needs of the race. To that side of the commandment the vast mass of human beings are obedient, not willingly always, but of necessity.

This being granted, the Infinite Love, in perfect understanding of the need of His own creation, provides that every seventh day man should lay aside the tools of his craft and enter into the upper reaches of his life's possibilities. It is well worth a careful note that the old essential Hebrew idea of the Sabbath was not that of gloom, but rather of gladness. The Sabbath was a day of delight, a holiday, a day in which man found, in cessation from toil, the possibility of entering into the realization of his own nature's capacity for enjoyment. To think upon Jehovah, to commune with the Infinite, uprising from the earth to stand erect, conscious of affinity with God, man was to foretaste the larger life for which the present was but a probation, and thus be equipped for taking hold with new consecration and firmer grip upon the work of the coming days.

Thus the Sabbath had its ethical meaning. From the quiet calm of the Sabbath day man returned to the necessary and swift movements of the six. As he did so, the integrity and justice of the things with which he had communed in the hours of rest, touched and in-

fluenced him in all the hours of work. He delved deeply, and measured justly, and weighed righteously for six days, because on the seventh he became conscious of the balances of the sanctuary and the righteousness of God.

Thus the two commandments are one, so interrelated that they can never be separated. To fail in obedience to the one is to make it impossible to obey the other. Obedience to each creates the power to obey the other. Work makes worship, worship fits for work.

II.—*Present-Day Application.*

From this consideration it will be seen that the Sabbath is not the ideal of any dispensation of Divine dealings. It is universal in the purpose of God, and was part of the economy of time which waited for the birth of man. The change of day in the Christian dispensation from the seventh to the first is of great symbolic value, and although no Divine word was written commanding the change, the spiritual facts of Christianity altered it surely, yet without proclamation or noise. Until Christ had come, man worked toward his Sabbath. Since Christ, he works from his Sabbath. In the old economy, in the last analysis, the Sabbath depended upon the work; in the new, the work grows out of the Sabbath.

Thus, the grace of God as revealed in Christ includes the first principles of the Divine government, and yet brings them to the level of the need of man in his impotence and fall.

These are the busiest days that humanity has ever seen, days of strenuous life and quick movement, days in which men have no time for the contemplation of anything out of which the virtue has passed, merely out of respect for the time when virtue yet was in it. Effete things must be swept on one side, and only those that contribute to the well-being of the race are to be maintained.

How will this aspect of the age affect the question of the fourth commandment? The conditions of life to-day increasingly demand work, that is, as has been before indicated, among the vast majority of the human family. Not only the law of God, tender and beneficent, but the law of human society, too often stern and cruel, says to man, Thou shalt work! The fact that there are any who escape obedience to the command is the saddest fact in sociology. If the necessity for work were still understood in all its Divine bearings, no human being in Whitechapel or Belgravia, on Fifth avenue or in tenement house, would be allowed to eat a meal until that meal had been purchased by the contribution of a quota of toil to the commonwealth of work.

Returning, however, to the previous position, that this is pre-eminently the day in which men work, it is an appalling fact that forgetfulness of God has issued in the folly of forgetfulness of, or opposition to, His law concerning the Sabbath. Atheism, of course, would sweep away that great time symbol of the tender compassion of the Father of men. The loss of the Sabbath is the necessary outcome of the de-

thronement of God; and all the degradation of humanity that always follows the sweeping away from national life of the seventh day of rest is the logical sequence of Atheism. Well and graphically did Paul describe its issue in his word "atheists and without hope in the world."

The most insidious and dangerous attack upon the Sabbath, however, is that of those who would, to use their own phrase, secularize it. These are they who would take advantage of the rest which has come to them through the government of God, in order to prove by the folly of their pleasure-seeking, and the weary restlessness of their feverish activity, their departure from that government. If men had but eyes to see, and hearts to understand the silent goings of the eternal things, a sojourn in Paris would be the most powerful sermon that could be preached on the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the desecration of everything that is distinctively glorious in human nature which follows in the wake of its unhallowing.

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE.

What is the church's duty to-day? Much has been made of the attitude of Christ in speech and deed toward the Sabbath. Some have imagined that by words He uttered and by deeds He did He relaxed the binding nature of the old command. This view, however, is to absolutely misunderstand and misinterpret the doing and the teaching of Jesus. First, in this connection, let it be remembered that all He

said concerning it He uttered while He was fulfilling His mission as the Jewish Messiah. It is impossible too clearly to state the fact, because many who teach that in the Christian dispensation the original ideal of the Sabbath is not binding, quote our Lord's words in support of their contention. This is indeed to fail to distinguish between things that differ. His great statements reveal the true meaning of the Sabbath as observed under a Jewish economy. They undoubtedly have a far wider application, reaching back to the original ideal, and throwing light far on to the end of time. Said He, "The Sabbath was made for man." The fair inference is that while man walks in the ways of God, he must of necessity make a Divinely intended use of this great gift. Said He, moreover, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Not, let it be noticed, "Son of God," but "Son of Man." Speaking here of Himself certainly, but of Himself in representative capacity as fulfilling the first Divine intention, He claims to be, not the destroyer, but Lord of the Sabbath.

Those who through His finished work have entered into that new realm of life in which all work grows out of rest, and the meanest activity of the commonest day finds its root and inspiration in the cross of His passion and the glory of His resurrection morning, must ever be loyal to the law of Infinite Love, and during the little while in which they wait and watch for the morning, gather in the seven-fold light of the Christian Sabbath for spiritual development and exercise, that so through all the working days there

may be perpetual life in the power of the eternal things considered on the first day of the week. The Sabbath idea, as now embodied in the resurrection day, must be defended from all attacks, and by the joyousness of worship and the readiness of service, demonstrate its delight.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."
EXODUS XX. 12.

DIFFERENCES of opinion have been expressed as to the division of the Decalogue, some maintaining that the first four commandments were written upon the first table, and the last six upon the second. Others have held that upon each table five were written. The first theory maintains that the first division defines the law that governs man's relationship to God, while the second division defines the law that governs his relations to his fellow. Those who hold the second theory maintain that the fifth commandment is part of the law regulating man's relation to God. Dean Farrar suggests that the first five were written upon one table, and may be spoken of as *Pietas*, while the second five upon the second table may be spoken of as *Probitas*. It will be seen, therefore, that the difficulty is in the placing of the fifth commandment. Dean Chadwick suggests that it is a bridge connecting the two. This is, perhaps, the most reasonable explanation. It is, however, so clearly a commandment dealing with the re-

lation of one human being to another, that here it is considered as the first of the second half of the Decalogue, that half, namely, which reveals for all time the Divine thought of human relationship.

This commandment is most closely linked in thought and intention to those that have preceded it, for here the parent is viewed as being in the place of God to the child. In the early days of human life, while as yet the mind is unable to grasp the most elementary ideas of God, the supreme facts concerning Him are to be impressed upon the child by a revelation of them in its parents. In the procession of human life the child owes its being to its parents, and one of the most evident and remarkable facts of human nature is the attitude of the opening mind and affection of the little one toward them, an attitude absolutely differing from that entertained toward any other person. What God is to the adult, parents are to the child—lawgiver and lover, provider and controller. Upon the child's response to the first facts of relationship will depend its response to the higher facts to be revealed in the process of the years. Happy are those children who pass by a natural and beautiful sequence from the honoring of their parents to the hallowing of the name of their God. Happy are those parents who so hallow the name of their God that it becomes easy for the children entrusted to their care to honor them.

This conception of the command lifts it at once into the front rank of importance, and reveals the fact that it has a dual significance. First, of course, it is a law for children, and none the less certainly it in-

cludes an ideal life for parents, of the most stringent and binding nature. Its importance cannot be overestimated, as all the subsequent commandments concerning human relationship will be easy or difficult to obey, according to the measure of obedience rendered to this. Consider, then, first the command; secondly, the light thrown upon it by the New Testament ideals and teaching; and, lastly, its practical application to the conditions of life now obtaining.

I.—*The Command.*

It is too often taken for granted that this is a commandment addressed to young children only. Nothing can be further from the truth. Assuredly it is, in the first place, addressed to such, for the simple reason that, in the order of nature, children are always young first. To imagine, however, that the command loses its force when the days have gone in which it is possible to speak of children as young, is to misunderstand at least half of its deep significance. The word "honor" has a much larger meaning than that of obedience. The thought of obedience is necessarily included. In the process of the years, however, all human beings, for the development of their own possibilities, come to the place of personal responsibility, when they have to choose for themselves in the great crises and the minor matters of life. A boy will never be a man if he always must obey his parents. The training of the years of obedience will affect all the choice of subsequent years; but beyond the period of control there must come that of individual responsibility. It

is at once evident that this command includes the whole life of a child, for all men and women are still the children of their parents; and even though the days have passed when it is necessary or right that they should obey, the days are never past when it is necessary and right that they should honor their parents. The command, then, has a twofold application—first, to the period of childhood, and, secondly, to the period of adult life.

The meaning of the word "honor" is—to attach weight to; to put in the place of superiority; to hold in high opinion; to reverence, in the best sense of that word. To the child who is not yet of age to think, to plan, to will, honoring of parents consists in subjection, obedience implicitly and gladly rendered. This, like every law of God, is for the child a gracious and yet imperative requirement.

It is gracious in that it frees the child from responsibility and care, until character is formed and the mind trained to the possibilities of correct judgment. The Divine thought for the child is ever that it should play. The tides of young life are full of hope and movement and humor. That these should not be hindered in their development, God has set over the life those who in the very nature of the relationship they bear to the child will think the best thoughts, and plan the best programmes for it; and the little one, free from these cares for which it is not prepared, may grow and develop.

The command is imperative because the very immature condition of child-life necessitates mature

thought and arrangement and training, out of which are to grow the commands laid upon the child. To refuse to obey is to run the risk, or indeed, to insure the certainty, of wrecking the life, and making impossible the realization of all its fairest and highest possibilities. The very imperative nature, therefore, of the command is also proof of its gracious intention.

The exceeding beauty of the commandment is also seen in that God calls the child to obey those whom, in the very nature of things, he loves. There may be cases where tutors and schoolmasters may have to be placed *in loco parentis,* but it is certain that this is never so without peril to the child. The principle of obedience rendered to such is almost always that of fear of authority, whereas, in the Divine intention, the principle of obedience is that of love. This may hardly be the place in which to discuss the great educational system in vogue to-day, yet a passing word may be permitted which is spoken of strong conviction by one who himself was trained for the teaching profession, and that word may, perhaps, be most strongly put in a personal form. I would never, under any consideration, consent to put my boys for the larger portion of any year away from the influence of their mother's life and my personal interest, no matter how excellent were the schoolmaster and staff. Obedience to father and mother is God's safeguard and law of development for child-life.

The moment comes when for the perfect development of character the child must act apart from control. That honor should be rendered to the parents does not

then cease to be a Divine intention. It takes a new form, that namely of respect, which expresses itself in courtesy and kindly deeds, and where necessary, in provision being made for the comfort of the declining years. Where the first part of this intention, that of obedience, has been gladly rendered, the second can hardly, by any possibility, fail to be accorded. Passing from the period of freedom from care to the strenuous years when will is to be exercised and choice made alone, the child will appreciate the true value of that love that thought and planned and commanded in the earliest days; and response will be made in the reverence and love with which the child will illumine the last days of father and mother. As the keenness of the conflict of life becomes a reality, it is impossible to forget how the first years of existence were sheltered, and coming to understand that while childhood played itself into maturity it did so at the cost of the anxious thought and incessant toil and agonized prayer of parents, it becomes the delight of life increasingly to honor them and to pour upon them so much as may be the love which they created, and for which in the evening of life they long more, perhaps, than for any other blessing.

THE PROMISE OF LONG LIFE.

The promise coupled with this command, in common with almost all the promises made to the ancient people of God, applies rather to the nation than to the individual. It is the declaration of the result of accepting and acting upon a philosophy, rather than the an-

nouncement of a personal reward. There can be no doubt that the personal element is present, for in the majority of cases the honoring of the parents results in the realization of habits and character that tend to the lengthening of the days. Character moulded in the atmosphere of honor to parents has within it the element of quiet power which tends to prolong life. On the other hand, character formed in the atmosphere of insubjection has within it the element of recklessness and fever which tends to the shortening of life. The true application of the promise is, however, to the nation, and may thus be stated. That people, among whom the sacredness of the family ideal is maintained, and children render obedience to their parents during the period of immaturity, and always honor, will be the nation of strength, retaining its hold upon its own possessions, and abiding long in the land.

APPLICATION TO PARENTS.

Before turning from the consideration of the command as given in the Hebrew economy, some word must be said as to its application to parents. This application is obvious. Nothing is more certain than the fact that, if parents are to be honored, they must be honorable. If obedience is to be rendered gladly and implicitly, it must be to a control that is conditioned in love. Love that is God-like, far-seeing, and comprehensive, love which permits of no present pleasure at the cost of possible future pain; such love can only be where character is in harmony with Divine intention. No father or mother can think right thoughts or plan

pure programmes for their children unless they, in their turn, are living the life of subjection to God, and are receiving from him the ordering of all their ways. If, indeed, the father and mother by their representation of God to the child are to prepare that child for subjection to God by choice of will in the days to come, what perpetual responsibility rests upon them that their fellowship with God should be such as to insure their correspondence to His character, and, consequently, their correct representation of the same to their children. In brief, the surest way to insure that children shall honor parents, is for the parents to live the life before them which reflects the glory and grace of God.

II.—*The Light Thrown by New Testament Ideals and Teaching.*

This is one of the commandments of the old dispensation that no one will be prepared to say has been abrogated in the new. In common with the rest, it is included and emphasized in a more explicit revelation of the sacredness of the relation existing between parents and children, and a more emphatic statement of the Divine purpose and thought. The example of Christ itself is one of infinite beauty and great suggestiveness. The fact that God's second Man was sent into the world, not as was the first, in full possession of the distinguishing glories of humanity, but a babe having to pass through the period of childhood, is of infinite value in the light it throws upon the fifth commandment. During those early years the boy Jesus

was under the control of Mary, His mother, and His reputed father Joseph. He grew and advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men, under the developing control of human love and oversight.

When at the age of twelve they brought Him to the Temple to present Him before the Lord, a picture of Him in relation to His mother is presented that is full of suggestiveness. The fact that she sought Him sorrowing proves almost to a certainty that He had hardly ever been outside the immediate sphere of her influence. To miss Him, not to find Him immediately at hand, was to her something new and strange; and the picture of the anxious mother, assisted by her husband, seeking Him, reveals in vivid light the exquisite relationship existing between them in that home at Nazareth. When at last she found Him, His question to her, rightly read, reveals the same fact—that of His honor for her, His confidence in her. Said He:

"Wist ye not that I must be in My father's house?"

It seems that the very writing of these words may have robbed them of their music. Certain it is that a popular conception of them is out of harmony with the beauty of the whole scene and story. That He in any sense rebuked His mother is not conceivable. Put the emphasis upon the "ye"—"Wist *ye* not"—and a revelation is at once obtained of a question coming out of love and confidence, as though He had said:

"Mother, surely *you* knew Me well enough to know that nothing could detain Me but the affairs of that

Father of Whom you have given Me knowledge and revelation."

Then, be it remembered, there was here no breaking away from the restraint of parental control, for it is distinctly stated, "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He was subject unto them."

Some have seemed to imagine that when He spoke of His disciples as being His mother, His brethren, His sisters, He, in some measure, spoke slightingly of His mother. Such interpretation is, however, surely to misunderstand His meaning. No slight was cast upon her, but rather the highest honor upon His disciples.

For Him, also, the years of obedience ended, but the years of honor never. In the last and awful hours of His human life, amid the dense darkness of Calvary's unspeakable woe, He thought still of her whom He had so loved; thought, moreover, of her present necessity, and commended her to the loving care of the man who most deeply understood His love and the methods of its manifestation. Thus in the Person and example of Jesus the fifth commandment has its most glorious enforcement.

In His teaching, also, He gave the most forceful interpretation of the fifth commandment in its application to one of the abuses that He found around Him. Men were excusing themselves from the duty of providing for the necessity of their parents, by saying that funds which might have been used in that way were *Corban,* that is, dedicated to the service of the altar. In the most emphatic terms Jesus declared that

to dedicate funds to the altar which should be used in providing for the necessities of parents was to make void the law of God. According to this, then, it is a far more holy thing to use possessions for the care and comfort of parents in their age, than to present such funds to the altar of God to their neglect.

This example and teaching of the Master proves the New Testament position, a position which is unfolded and emphasized again and again in the writings of the apostles.

III.—*The Practical Issue.*

Perhaps no sign of the present time is more sad than the prevalence of disobedience on the part of children to parents during the days of childhood, and lack of reverence and respect when once the restraints of home have been left behind. This is manifested in very many ways, and, alas! is not peculiar to people outside the Christian Church. It has been my lot during the past sixteen years to stay in very many Christian homes. The strength and beauty of some of them abide as a perpetual fragrance. Others of them, alas! have left the most painful impressions. Children self-willed and consequently bringing themselves into perpetual unhappiness, and inflicting discomfort upon all who came in contact with them, have prophesied evil things for the days to come. Boys who have seemed ashamed to use to their circle of companions the word father, have substituted flippant and irreverent epithets, which, if they had but realized it, at once degraded, not their parents, but themselves in the thought

of all right-thinking people. Girls too often seem to look upon their mother as a household institution, provided in order that they might be free for all the frivolity of a giddy set. An eagerness to be away from home, a longing for the day when the forbidding or command of the parents might be escaped, these signs are on every hand, and they are of the saddest.

In very many cases the children are not so much to blame as the parents. This failure to honor father and mother, wherever it is found, is, in large measure, due to the breakdown of the parental ideal. The father has come to think of himself as a provider of food and raiment and education, and occasionally as a species of moral policeman, rather than as a revelation of God to his bairns. From the way in which thousands of fathers to-day treat their children, one would imagine that the name was a synonym for poorhouse-master, rather than a name lent in order that from it men may understand their true relation to their children, and the tremendous responsibility that rests upon them. The sin of fathers in the matter of the training of children is far greater than they have yet appreciated in this country. It is very questionable whether the hymn beginning—

When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus.

is a correct interpretation of the Bible story. The Greek pronoun is masculine, and the old Hebrew ideal was that the father was responsible for the training of the bairns. If fathers think of themselves as less than God intends them to be, they must not be surprised

if children cease to honor them. Too often, also, today, the mother makes herself the slave of her own children in all the details that make for material comfort, and forgets that she should be to them the most radiant revelation of the beauty of the Divine grace.

It should be noticed especially that the command is to honor father and mother. This is so because both are requisite to a true representation of God to the child, and consequently to the perfect development of the possibilities of the child's nature. Let there be a return on the part of parents to the high ideals of their own holy position, and there will assuredly be a return on the part of children to the pathway of obedience to the command to honor father and mother.

Let children, however, remember that everything depends for them upon their obedience to this fifth commandment of the Decalogue. Their relation to the first four "Words" is proved by their attitude to this. Infidelity, sacrilege, profanity, rebellion, are all included in the sin of failing to honor parents. It is equally true that all the following commands are included in the fifth. Children that honor their parents will be saved from murder, impurity, theft, slander, and covetousness. The history of the centuries proves that, under stress of swift and subtle temptation, young men and maidens have again and again proved invulnerable, by the memory and conscious influence of a godly father and sainted mother. Let every boy and girl, every youth and maiden, every man and woman, guard from attack the sacred shrine in which father

and mother are held to be beyond the criticism of the crowd, sacred and holy as the first revelations of God in the tenderness and strictness of their government.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt do no murder."—Exodus xx. 13.

This second commandment in the second table of the Decalogue is the first that deals purely and simply with the relation of man to man. So closely allied is human inter-relation to the relation existing between God and man, that this first word conditioning the former is based upon the latter. At the very foundation of the social fabric lies the fact of the sovereignty of God over every individual life. Before defining the laws which are to condition the well-being of society, the realm in which there may be no action based only on human will is clearly defined. Human life is emphatically declared to be sacred. It is a Divine creation, mysterious and magnificent in its genesis and possibility, utterly beyond the control or comprehension of any human being. It is, therefore, never to be taken at the will of one, who can by no means know the full meaning of its being. The revelation of God made to man proves that He has purposes for every individual and for the race, stretching far beyond the present moment or manifestation; and to terminate a single life is to set up the wit and wisdom of man as superior to that of God. The immensity of the issues of death is so great that there can be no sin against humanity, and, there-

fore, against God, greater than that of taking life. In this brief commandment, therefore, is contained a statement of the first principle of human life, so clear and so vital as to demand the closest attention. Notice, then, first, the command; secondly, the application of the principle it contains to the present day; and lastly, its application in the Kingdom of God.

I.—*The Command.*

Man's first relationship is to God. He is His offspring. He is, and he is what he is, by Divine volition and power. All other relationships grow out of this first one, and are, therefore, subservient to it. Subsequent commandments dealing with blood, social, and civic ties, are all binding upon men, because they are included within this first and highest relationship of life. The sacredness of marriage, the right of property, the importance of reputation, and the supremacy of character, all gain their force and value from the nature of life. They mark, in fact, the unfolding of life in its varied possibilities. The giving of life includes all. The cessation of life ends all. Every power of the individual is due to the power of God, and all the possibilities of the race are to be traced to the same original source. It follows, then, of necessity, that life, being a gift of God, is in itself the most wonderful relationship, that of man to God. This commandment, therefore, in simplest words, and yet in sternest manner, flings a fiery law around the life of every human being, reserving to Him Who first bestowed it the right to end it.

The change in translation which the Revised Ver-

sion has given is significant and important. Instead of "Thou shalt not kill," it reads "Thou shalt do no murder," and there is a difference in the thought suggested. It is possible to kill and yet not to murder; it is necessary, therefore, to have a clear understanding of what murder really is. Under the old economy, cities of refuge were provided, into which a manslayer might pass and find protection from the avenger of blood. A careful perusal of the account of the institution of these cities in Numbers xxxv. 9-34 will throw light upon the difference that may exist between killing and murder. All murder is, of course, killing, but all killing is not necessarily murder. In the passage referred to, the word "unwittingly" (R.V.), "unawares" (A.V.), reveals the difference. The man who, through error, unintentionally took the life of his fellow-man was allowed to take refuge within one of these cities. It is, however, explicitly stated that if the deed were done intentionally the city of refuge itself did not offer sanctuary.

Here, then, is the difference between killing and murder. Killing is unwitting and unintentional taking of life; murder consists in the intentional taking of human life on the alone responsibility of human will.

Let it be clearly noticed in passing that killing unwittingly was not looked upon as a light offence. The man who took life in this way was denied his liberty for an indefinite term. His safety was to be conditioned in his abiding in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest. If he ventured from the safety of those protecting walls he also might pay the

penalty of death at the hands of the avenger of blood. For the murderer, however, the man who of malicious intention, took the life of his fellow-man, no sanctuary was to be found on the face of the earth.

The simplicity of the commandment reveals its far-reaching application. Whoever is murdered, and whomsoever by, the law of God is against the act. This, in common with every utterance of Divine government, is no piece of class legislation; but human life is of value because it is human life, whether its days are being passed in the purple of the court, or in the rags of the dunghill; and the claim of man to safety from death at the hands of his fellowman is based upon the life he has received from God, not upon the accidental circumstances that are so largely the outcome of human arrangement.

In the same way the person taking the life of another is a murderer, whatever the social position may be. Taking human life is never made legal by the privilege of power, or plea of poverty. God clearly declares life, thinking, acting life, to be outside the realm where the will of man has any right to act as to its continuance or cessation.

This at once marks as murder the intentional taking of human life, whether by the individual, by society, or by the nation; and brands as a breaking of the commandment the act of killing, capital punishment, and all war, save where such act, such punishment, such war, immediately and unequivocally follow the clearly-expressed commandment of God.

In the history of the ancient Hebrew people God delegated His right to men for the maintenance of a social order based upon righteousness. The death penalty was visited at His express command upon certain forms of sin, and wherever the hand of man took the life of his fellow-man under the clearly-marked conditions of the Divine economy, killing was not murder, but the carrying out of the Divine will through a human instrument. Achan, stoned to death, did not lose his life by the volition of his fellow-men. It was forfeited by the will of God at the hands of men. The executioners were but carrying out the express order of heaven. No leader of the old time, whether he were judge, king, or prophet, had any right of his own will, even in the interest of the nation, to take human life. The matter was very different when God made man the agent of His act. That the death sentence was never passed at the caprice of human will is most certainly proved by a careful study of the Mosaic economy, in which the sins which were punishable by death are minutely described, and the laws of their detection and judgment carefully expressed.

The same line of argument applies to the question of war under the old economy. The only justifiable wars in human history have been those undertaken immediately and directly in obedience to a definitely express Divine command. In such cases God chose to make man, instead of plague or of famine, the agent of His act of judgment. The history of the ancient people proves that when wars were undertaken only under these conditions the loss of life was almost entirely upon

the side of those against whom God sent His hosts. When, as was often the case, God's people entered into war upon their own initiative, they were routed with slaughter. The whole history of the Hebrew people proves that the sixth commandment was of abiding importance. Human life in every divine economy has been held sacred from the attack of man upon his own initiative.

II.—*The Application of the Principle to the Present Day.*

This sacred basal law of human society abides until this hour. The only difference between the Christian era and that of the Hebrew dispensation is to be found in the fact that with the advent of Christ the law became absolute. From that moment through the centuries there has been no delegation of the Divine right to any human tribunal or court. "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son," and the speech of the Son magnifies the law in this particular respect, and is of such a character as to make all killing murder, save that which is purely accidental. No person will be prepared to say that murder by an individual is justifiable to-day for purposes of revenge. The destruction of life for public ends the Master rebuked in His own disciples, when they would have called down fire from heaven upon those that refused to hear Him. War was condemned absolutely by the teaching and action of Christ when in the garden He rebuked Peter for using

the sword, commanding him, "Put up . . . thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and when before Pilate He said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight."

It is often argued that, in defence of the weak and oppressed, war may be justifiable; and that, surely, is a plausible argument. It is not for us, however, to take our standard of conduct from the most refined and cultured paganism, but from Christ Himself, Who speaks to this age. It is, therefore, of the supremest importance to remember that the point at which, in the quotations already given, the Lord denounced war, was when its possibility was suggested for His own defence against the malice and wickedness of the unholiest coalition that the world has ever seen. In His case, not by the punishment of evil-doers, not by conflict against oppressors, but by suffering, and through death, triumphs were won; and whoever is prepared to justify war under any circumstances, must do so at the cost of calling in question the wisdom of the Lord's action.

The same line of argument applies to capital punishment. Men may have their modes of government, and the world may still attempt to discover through policy and philosophy new methods of creating a nobler society, but in the purpose of God there is but one King, His anointed Son; and one code of ethics, the speech of that Son; and one principle of government, the grace of that Son; and within the economy of that kingdom all punishment inflicted by man on man is remedial and

redemptive. Not merely for the salvation of the wronged, but also for the reclamation of the one who wrongs was the cross uplifted, and when man visits man with death, he exercises a form of punishment which shuts out the possibility of a remedy.

In the light of the Christian era war finds no justification, and capital punishment has no place.

There are other forms of murder in these latter days, which are peculiarly the product of the age, and which are hardly ever named murder, because it is difficult sometimes to detect the hand that strikes the deadly blow. The oppression of masses of people in the hunt for wealth is murder, and though our laws are so feeble that they are unable to detect the wrong-doers and punish them, this keen, swift word of God traces every murderer to his home, and the God Who hears the cry of His suffering people will call all such to account. The victims of lead-poisoning in the potteries, and of "phossy-jaw" in the match factories, are murdered by the men who, claiming to be free from all blame, too often desecrate the tabernacle of God by unholy gifts. The death of the little child in the over-crowded hells of the slums is murder by the man who gathers his wealth from the rack-rented houses, without a care for those who perish that he may gain. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a very popular sentiment even to-day; but men seem to forget that the lips that first uttered the words do not recommend the sentiment.

The Infinite Love has found its fullest expression in this Christian age, and therefore human life is more than ever sacred. God has not for the last nineteen

hundred years delegated to a nation His own right over human life, for among the records there is none proving that He has ordained war, since His Son declined the use of the sword for the winning of His victories.

III.—*The Application in the Kingdom of God.*

So far the subject of the application of the law to the whole age has been under consideration. In conclusion it may be asked in what sense the commandment is binding upon those who are actually within the kingdom, claiming that Christ is absolute Monarch in their lives.

In the law of the Kingdom enunciated upon the mount of old, He said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." Here murder is tracked to its lair, anger; and the King declares that if anger be in the life of one of His subjects, such subject is in danger of judgment; that if anger find an expression in contempt, "Raca," such subject shall be "in danger of the council," that is, of discipline. And if such subject shall say "Thou fool," that is an expression that marks condemnation, such subject shall be "in danger of the hell of fire."

There is no room here for a question as to whether a man in the Kingdom may take the life of another. He

is not to be angry with his brother. The Revised Version has omitted the words "without a cause," for while many ancient authorities insert it, the weight of opinion is in favor of the view that Jesus did not use these words. Anger itself in the heart against a man is contrary to the genius and spirit of Jesus. Anger there will be, and must be, against sin; but, as in the case of the Lord Himself, anger against sin is not anger against the sinner. All the aggressive force of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is to be directed against sin, and none of it against the men who are in the grip of sin. The Church of Christ has always been renegade from the Spirit of Christ when she has attempted to carry on His warfare with the weapons that are carnal; and when in the name of the Prince of Life, life has been destroyed, He has been insulted, and this sixth commandment has been broken. Under the kingship of Jesus, if the possibility of murder lurk within the heart of man, it is counted as murder. Whenever He triumphs in human life He creates the man, in dealing with whom all other human life is reckoned sacred.

The nation, the society, the individual which takes life of set purpose is guilty of murder. This is hardly the age in which such a sentiment will be popular, but it is getting to be time that the Church cease debating the sophistries of the age, and find her way back to bedrock principles, refusing absolutely to be frightened or cajoled into complicity with movements that are in their very nature contradictory to, and subversive of, the teaching and the Spirit of Christ. As yet there has

been no answer to the philosophy of Russell Lowell's satire:

Ez fer war, I call it murder,
There you hev it plain and flat;
I don't want to go no furder
Than my Testyment fer that.
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've gut to git up airly
Ef you want to take in God.

'Taint your eppyletts an' fethers
Make the thing a grain more right;
'Taint affollerin' your bell-wethers
Will excuse ye in His sight.
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you.

There is a vast amount of highly respectable, cultured, and most interesting paganism abroad in the world; and it is, after all, much to be preferred to the barbarism of the past; but, in the name of God and Christ, let the line of demarcation between this paganism and Christianity be clear and distinct. The Divine word was given on Sinai, amid the thunder and the lightning, "Thou shalt do no murder." That word in gentle speech, far more searching and binding, is breathed through the Christian era, from the lips of Him Who died to save life; and whenever a human life is slain upon the field of battle, or taken in the name of society, or murdered in the interests of the wealthy,

His wounding is repeated, and His teaching trampled under foot. The simple facts should be kept in mind. Life is of God. To take it, as to give it, is His prerogative. Man has no right to do so, save where immediately delegated to the work by the express command of the Most High. In this dispensation of grace, God never delegates this right to man. Those, then, who are His, must decline to have any complicity with war, raise their protest against punishment which takes life, refuse to have profit or pleasure at the cost of human life, and so live in communion with Him, that anger shall be destroyed within, save as it moves in the power of His infinite love against evil in every form.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."—Exodus xx. 14.

Immediately after the commandment declaring the sacredness of human life follows that which safeguards the highest earthly relationship, and conditions in strength and purity the holy and sacred office of the procreation of life. God's first circle of society is that of the family, and the origin of the family in His purpose lies within the sacred unity of man and woman. The first principle of human life is its relationship to God. The second is its inter-relation, that of man to man. Within this second realm the type and origin of all subsequent relations is the family. Nothing can be more essential, therefore, for the social order, than that the relationship upon which all subsequent ones are

based should be jealously guarded against any and every form of attack. The unity of the race is the purpose of God, and this grows out of the unity of husband and wife. The union of husband and wife is not capricious, but essential; for "God created man in His own image . . . male and female created He them" (Gen. i. 27). The unity of husband and wife is thus the unity of the expression of the Divine image. Both are necessary to give full expression to the Divine. The duality, therefore, is only the double expression of a most sacred and holy power of procreation.

Such a consideration as this reveals at once the tremendous force of this seventh commandment, and explains its binding nature upon the race in all ages and places. The actual words of the command are directed against the sin of unchastity as violating the sacred rights of the marriage relation. Its spirit emphatically forbids all unchastity, for if this sense of essential unity in marriage be admitted, and it be accepted that the union of lives is always in the plan and government of God, then it at once becomes evident that all unchaste conduct before marriage, on the part of man or woman, is a wrong done to the marriage that is to be; and unfaithfulness before marriage is as much adultery as unfaithfulness after marriage.

There is no subject, perhaps, more difficult to deal with faithfully, and yet there is none demanding more honest and fearless handling.

Consider, then, first the command; secondly, its bearing on certain facts of present-day life; and lastly,

the fierce and searching Christian ethic that touches the subject.

I.—*The Command.*

The command is a simple, unqualified, irrevocable negative. "Thou shalt not"! No argument is used, no reason given, because none is required. The sin is of so destructive and damning a nature that it is in itself sufficient cause for the stern forbidding. To emphasize the commandment, therefore, it is only necessary to consider the sin against which it is directed. A sevenfold vice is this sin of unchaste conduct, being sin against the Individual, the Family, Society, the Nation, the Race, the Universe, and God.

It is a sin against the Individual. This needs no proof. Nature visits the sin with the heaviest penalties in every department of the complex being of man. The terrible results of unchaste life in the purely physical realm are such as cannot be named here. They are well known. Every man of science will bear testimony to the awful demand that Nature makes for purity, and will assert that she has no pity for the unclean. The statistics of lunacy in this and all lands could tell horrible tales of the effect of unclean life upon the mental side of man's nature. Many sad stories prove that the highest spiritual culture and usefulness have been marred and ended by the sin of yielding unlawfully to lust. The perfect unity and balance of spirit, soul, and body is destroyed by this vice, and that man or woman surely and irrevocably commits suicide who falls into and persists in unchaste habits and life.

It is a sin against the Family. The sacredness of motherhood and childhood, and the demands they make upon the care and thought of all, are secured and met in the Divine institution of marriage. Wherever the rights of the marriage relationship are violated and set aside, God's provision for both is broken down, and the disastrous result of the breakdown of the family circle and entity results. The race is to be trained in groups, and the power and provision for such training is the government of the essential love of parents. As the fifth commandment clearly teaches, the two sides of parenthood are necessary to the nurture of child-life. When the family is destroyed as a perfect whole by the sin of unchastity, an incalculable harm is done to the children. There is no more heartbreaking announcement in the newspapers than that which declares that in the granting of a decree *nisi,* the charge of the children has been given to one parent. Therein lies the destruction of the family after the Divine pattern, and the sin that leads to it is indeed terrible for this reason also.

It is a sin against Society. This follows from the previous consideration. The family is a unity of individuals sharing a common life and governed by a common love. Society is a union of families. Every attempt to create society upon any other basis is wicked and ends in disaster. The history of the monastic orders is a flaming proof of this fact. The attempts also to organize societies upon bases of common interests of trade or intellectual pursuits all break down sooner or later. Society is the accumulation of fami-

lies, and all the human inter-relations of property, of reputation, and of character break down with the breakdown of the family. The sin which blights the marriage relation and destroys the family is the enemy of all true socialism. All the things that may be had in common can only so be shared as it is for ever understood that communism in the realm of sex is the most damnable sin against the commonwealth.

It is a sin against the Nation. This, again, moves out as a logical sequence from the former considerations. The adulterer is the enemy of the state, and as such, after being divorced in the divorce court, should be imprisoned by the criminal courts. The man or woman upon whose guilt the marriage tie is broken, no Christian minister of any denomination has a right to remarry. It is an act of treason to the state to allow such persons to go free. They should be incarcerated in separation from the other sex to the end of their days, and then they could not wipe out the wrong they did the nation when by unchaste action they struck a blow at the family. The greatness of a people depends upon the purity and strength of the people, and in every nation where the marriage relation is violated with impunity the virus of death is surely and certainly at work. This is at once proved by the lurid lights that flash from the decay of Assyria, Greece, Rome, and in our own times, of France also. In this respect it is most true that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs xiv. 34.)

It is a sin against the Race. No man can deny his accountability for a share in the development or destruction of the race. The solidarity of humanity is more than a dream of visionaries. It is an indisputable fact. Every life is contributing its quota of force to the forces that make or mar. All are hindering or hastening the perfect day. The crime of prolonging sorrow and agony lies at the door of every impure human being. The agony and wrong of degraded humanity is a curse upon the unchastity of the past, and every licentious and bestial man or woman is inflicting new wounds, not only upon the immediate present, but also upon the years yet unborn. The voice of the human race, so often, alas! unheard in the clamor of the interests of the passing moment, is thundering perpetually the Divine command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

It is a sin against the Universe. The life of the universe is love. The origin of all is love, for "God is love." The propagation of all is love. From the highest form, that of the unity of the marriage relation, through all the lower spaces of action, love is the law of growth. The lair of the wild beast is fiercely guarded by the love that holds it sacred. The nesting of the birds is token of the impulse of the love-life that throbs through all creation. The bee that carries the pollen from flower to flower is the messenger of the same instinct. Love is everywhere. The sin of lustful unchastity is the violation of love, blighting and destroying it. Let every adulterer and adulteress know, then, that their impurity sins against all the genius of

the universe, and if they but listen, every pure and holy love of man and maiden, every devotion of the beasts to their mates, every song of bird, and every hum of the wing of summer bee, proclaims the heinousness of their offence against the whole creation.

It is a sin against God. This has virtually been said in every previous argument. Every human being is made in His image. Of every family He is the true Father. In all society He is the Shepherd. Over all nations He is King. The race is His own to its utmost limit. The love law of the universe is the will of God for all. Thus, lastly and consequently, every impure act or person strikes a blow at the very heart of God. By an eternal necessity He excludes the "abominable . . . and fornicators" (Rev. xxi. 8) from the new heaven and the new earth, and gives them "their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Thus the seventh commandment is seen to be binding and inexorable because of the purpose of God that all His love creation should reach the highest platform of perfection. To minimize the law against impurity is to deny the value of love.

II.—*Application of the Command To-Day.*

There are certain signs of the times which point to the necessity for a re-statement of this commandment.

The first of these is the tendency, which is only too apparent, to loosen the binding nature of the marriage tie. There seems to be an increasingly popular notion that the marriage relation is a civil one only. This is a

vital error. It is wholly Divine. The lawfulness of the married state lies within the supreme fact of sex, and this is a part of the Divine creation. God, who thus created, has conditioned the law of union, and every marriage is, therefore, a part of a Divine plan.

Alas! too constantly the relationship is entered upon without any recognition of God, and hence the awful misery that often ensues, for no human being can tamper with Divine matters without being harmed. Once the union is consummated it is for the period of life.

There is only one reason for its disannulling until death, and that is the far more awful fact than death, that, namely, of fornication. The prevalent notion that incompatibility of temperament is sufficient reason for divorce is a blow at the very throne of God; and also, therefore, at the foundations of human well-being. Purity must refuse to give one moment's countenance in any form to such a doctrine of hell. It is a most appalling and horrible thing that to this day a certain woman's literary work is much applauded by professing Christian people. This woman turned her back upon the Divine commandment and spent the later years of her life in braving out her action. No book that she wrote shall find a place on the shelves of my library.

Another sign of the times in this direction is the filthy fiction which has polluted the realm of literature in recent years, fiction in which the marriage relation is treated with amused pity, and whoremongers and adulterers are pitied and excused, if not defended. Such literature is the most pernicious prostitution of a

free press that any country can suffer from. A writer who once publishes a book or an article which undervalues the necessity of absolute chastity should by such action put himself or herself outside the pale of true literature. So long as the nation is in thousands of its members impure, such reading will be provided and read; but surely every member of the Christian Church should be true to the unalterable law of love expressed in this commandment, and that not only in their own personal lives, but in the influence they exert. Then the Church should refuse to give any countenance whatsoever to such writers or their books.

Then, again, is there not a growing danger of ministering to impurity in the multiplication on every hand of callings for women which throw them among men and give them wages which are insufficient? One of the greatest curses of England to-day, both for the sake of her sons and daughters, is the employment of young women in the hotels and tobacconists' shops of our cities and towns. At this point I may be old-fashioned, but I confess to great regret that the conditions of life created in this feverish age of Mammon worship have made it necessary for our daughters to go out of our homes at all to secure their living. If this be necessary, at any rate let them take the most religious care as to the character of the men with whom they are to be thrown in contact day by day. Unchastity has begun too often under conditions that seemed to be honest and pure enough.

Then how one would thank God if some word that was not prudish or narrow might be spoken to the

women of this country about their dress. The half-dress of the society woman is surely a sign of reversion to type, and has in it the pandering to animalism which has for ages been the curse of the marriage relation. Moreover, the distortions of the female form that are common everywhere are alike an insult to beauty and to goodness, and therefore to God. I am not pleading for the uniform of the Salvationists, nor even the bonnet of the Pentecostal League, but for the becoming and beautiful and modest attire, which shall have no possible suggestiveness that is not in harmony with the homage and reverence that man should ever render to woman. This is a subject that seems to be of no moment to some. Let every daughter of the King think the subject out alone with her Master, and that which I have failed to say will be understood.

And yet once more. There is an anomaly that dies hard in the distinction that is being made between the guilt of man and woman in this matter of unchastity. When General Booth issued that remarkable book, "Darkest England," he said, in defence of his using the word "fornication":

"Why not say prostitution? For this reason: prostitution is a word applied to one-half of the vice, and that the most pitiable. Fornication hits both sinners alike."

The importance of that statement cannot be overestimated. Until the man who sins is branded with as deep a scar as is the woman, that public opinion which shields him is guilty of complicity with this vice which is deadly and damning.

III.—*The Christian Ethic.*

After all that has been said, there yet remain the most scorching, withering words of all to repeat. They fell from the lips of the Incarnate Purity in that manifesto of His Kingdom which He gave to His disciples during the days of His sojourn on earth. Let them be read as He uttered them: "I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell. It was said also, Whosoever should put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Matt. v. 28-32.)

If this law be obeyed, the impure act will for evermore be prevented, for this ethic passes beyond the act to the thought. According to this teaching the wish proves capacity for the deed, and is to be condemned equally with the deed. In order that impurity of thought and desire may be prevented, it is profitable to maim the body. The eye and the hand are

precious, but not so precious as purity of spirit. At the severest cost the law of love is to be obeyed. He knew that unchastity of thought and deed makes spiritual development impossible, and therefore repeated the old commandment with new emphasis and meaning. The word of Jesus is the sternest of all, and there can be no obedience to it save as the heart itself is purified. The grace of His Kingdom is manifested here, in that He imparts His own purity to those who submit to Him, and thus saves all such from the unholy and polluting influence of unchaste conduct.

The duty of every Christian, and of the Christian Church, is plainly marked in the light of this word of the Master. First, of course, there must be no trifling with impurity, and discipline must be received within the borders of the fellowship. To permit known wrong to continue unjudged is to insult the Lord Himself, and to rob the Church of her power of witness to purity. There must be no intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly. The high ideal of the family taught in the New Testament can only be realized when the marriage relation is cemented and glorified in the common loyalty of husband and wife to Jesus Christ. If the Church is to be the messenger of peace and power to the present age, there must be no room in her fellowship for any person who in any degree is unchaste in speech or conduct; and no room in individual lives for any act or thought that is smirched with uncleanness.

It is for those to whom is given the sacred work of teaching the will of God, by precept and life to repeat

the great purifying laws of God in words that burn, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; "Everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not steal."—Exodus xx. 15.

At this point the Decalogue passes from the discussion of the essential facts of human life to matters of lesser importance, affecting human inter-relation. By the phrase "of lesser importance" it is not intended to suggest that they are unimportant, but in the words of Jesus, "Life is more than meat"; and up to this point the commandments have forbidden sins which interfere with the relation of man to God, or harm in any way the life of man in itself. In the Mosaic economy, violation of any of the first seven commandments incurred the death penalty. This was not so with regard to the last three, proving that in the realm of comparison the first seven are of greater importance. To the mind of God, worship and the relation of the worshipper to Himself are matters of supreme moment.

The rebellious nature of sin is remarkably evidenced by the fact that human laws have inverted the order of this importance. At the present moment, laws protecting property are far more numerous upon the statute-books of all lands than laws protecting life. It would assuredly be wrong for man to punish man for refusal to worship, or for worshipping gods other than the

true, or the true in ways other than appointed; yet it is an appalling matter that the breakdown of active and solemn recognition of relationship between man and God is hardly counted sin at all in public opinion. A preacher may denounce murder, impurity, theft, lying, in terms of fiery indignation, and he will carry any ordinary audience with him, but if he denounce the sin of godlessness in the same terms, he will most probably arouse the resentment of a large percentage of his congregation. And yet this sin of rebellion is the root from which all others grow. Gradually, however, the best opinion of all men is being conformed to the Divine ideal, and the age is coming to understand that "life is more than meat." Whether it can be said that as yet there is any approach to a consensus of opinion, that life is only perfectly conditioned in the will of God, may be open to question.

So much having been said as to the relative value of the commandment, now turn to a consideration of this law dealing with the question of human possession. "Thou shalt not steal." There is urgent need for close attention to this commandment, for while the actual act of stealing is looked upon increasingly as vulgar, yet the day is characterized by a multiplication of methods of theft, which men are prone to speak of by any other than the right. "Business acumen," "the habit of the trade," "imperialism," are all phrases used under certain circumstances, where the true fact of the case might be expressed in the one, less euphonious, but far more truthful, word *theft*. Even in the realm of actual stealing, if the person perpetrating the deed is of suffi-

ciently good social standing, one is apt to hear of kleptomania. It is a curious thing that the word is hardly, if ever, used in the East-end police-courts. Let there be an honest facing of the Divine purpose as marked in the command, "Thou shalt not steal." Consider, first, the command; secondly, the light of the New Testament upon it; and, thirdly, its application to our own time.

I.—*The Command.*

The command is, in the first instance, a recognition of the rights of property. It gives the lie to the dictum of Proudhon, the father of anarchism;—*La propriété, c'est le vol.* Property is not theft. Man is by his creation able to possess, and to deny the possibility of possessing property is to make theft impossible. In the last analysis all possessions belong to God, as all wealth is created by God. Man, in his relation to God, is ever compelled to own that nothing he possesses can be held to be outside of the right of divine interference. Man in relation to man can claim to possess, outside the right of human interference, this being clearly recognized by the command.

While thus recognizing the rights of property, the commandment forbids any violation of these rights. For illustration, let it be taken for granted that men do possess the things which they call their own. It will at once be seen that there are only three ways in which man can come into possession of anything: either by the free gift of another person, or by toil, which receives something as legitimate return, or by theft, the taking that from another which belongs to him.

The commandment recognizes the first two, and forbids the third. The reason for this will be discovered by an examination of the three. The first two are based upon the essential laws of human inter-relation; namely, love and work. The first of such is the law of love. The gift bestowed by one upon another, or by another upon one, is an expression of love, and becomes the property of the one to whom it is given. Something earned by toil, for the possession of which the work done has been a legitimate return, in that it has also benefited the person who received it, is property. Theft violates both of these laws. The thief cannot love the person from whom he steals, and it is very difficult for the person from whom the theft is made to love the thief. The thief violates the law of toil by attempting to possess without toil, and thus to take from another something for which no equivalent return is made. Thus the commandment recognizes the true rights of property, the rights of love and work, and forbids the possession of anything save upon the condition of obedience to these laws.

II.—*The Light of the New Testament.*

This may be gathered from one remarkable passage —"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need" (Eph. iv. 28). It will immediately be seen that the argument of the preceding section is here gathered up and stated with startling force. Mark well the antithesis. On the one side, stealing, the false method of

possession; on the other, working and giving, the true methods. This is a drawing of the line with surprising definiteness. According to this, all property which has not been obtained by working or by giving, is stolen property. Every item possessed has either been bestowed as a gift, or worked for, or stolen. Apply this to much of the social, commercial, and national life of our time, and a great deal of vaunted morality will be seen to be grossest immorality.

But the New Testament carries the idea further, and lays upon the strong the burden of the weak, declaring that property is to be gained by work, not merely that it may be possessed, but that the over-plussage may be given to the disabled brother by the way, who has lost his power to work, and yet may not steal. Thus within the new economy of the "holy nation," that man also steals who simply works for the satisfaction of his own necessity, and fails to recognize the strenuous claim of the common life he shares with the weakest member of the new social order. This last statement has reference strictly only to those who are living immediately within the Kingdom of God. But, as the very genius of the life of that kingdom is that of caring for and loving the unfit and the unworthy, no man who claims to have put the crown of his being upon the brow of the Christ is truly loyal to his King save as he wins by toil possessions that he may pass on to the most needy and afflicted.

III.—*Its Application to Our Own Times.*

Broadly stated, the eighth commandment forbids all forms of communism which deny man's right to prop-

erty. Of course, the word property is used throughout this article in its simplest as well as in its broadest sense. Anything honestly obtained is property, be it ever so small or large. It, moreover, denies all right to property, save that of gift or work. All that a man possesses as the result of gifts freely bestowed, or of work honestly done, is secured to him by this enactment; and whosoever shall come into possession of any such property, save by the free gift of the present owner, or as return for work rendered, is to be branded as a thief, and punished accordingly. Therefore, the commandment arrests all men that possess anything which they have obtained in any way, save as the free gift of another, or in return for work rendered. This commandment, then, strikes at many different forms of stealing, which are being practised to-day.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say anything concerning the simple act of purloining articles belonging to other persons. This is universally acknowledged to be vulgar, and petty larceny may be severely punished through the agency of the criminal courts of the country. For this reason very largely, thousands of persons who are in heart quite capable of dishonesty are kept from the overt act. Even in most respectable and moral society, however, some forms of common theft have come to be looked upon as regrettable lapses, rather than sin against God. One illustration will suffice. It would be interesting, but extremely painful, to pass through the homes of thousands of Church members, instituting a rigid examination as to the ownership of all the books to be found therein. The habit of bor-

rowing books is in itself pernicious, but the appalling extent of the carelessness as to the return of the same is hardly realized, because people forget that to borrow a book and not to return it is a theft. If these sentences should cause the discovery of some of my books, and they are returned to me, I shall be for ever grateful for having had this opportunity of enforcing the eighth commandment.

The sin of stealing is terribly prevalent in the matter of fraudulent getting. In this age, when a man's "worth" is estimated by the amount he possesses, the lust of possession seems to destroy the principle of honesty in thousands of those who in other matters are scrupulously careful. In certain circles, also, trickery, dishonesty, lying, are all looked upon as evidences of shrewdness and acumen in business matters. The commandment that governs a very large percentage of commercial life to-day is not "Thou shalt not steal," but "Thou shalt not be found out." Unjust weights, false measures, and (by far the most common of all) lying advertisements, all break the eighth commandment. Nothing need be said of the long-firm swindles, and the bogus companies that are so common, save this, that God Almighty will hold every person guilty of a breach of the eighth commandment who has given his or her name to any such enterprise without having carefully and personally examined the honesty or dishonesty thereof.

Then the whole habit of gambling is of the essence of theft, and this for the reason that it is a means by which men come into possession of property which is a

violation of both the laws upon which property may alone be held. A man who gambles, whether by play or betting, puts into his pocket, money for which he has done no honest work; and by the very act he robs the man from whom he receives, and violates the law of love. Among all the foolish things that the enemies of righteousness have ventured to say, no person has yet been found foolish enough to write an essay on the bond of brotherhood existing among betting men, or the social possibilities of gambling. It is, moreover, a fact that ought not to pass unnoticed, that the gambling fever is the cause of more petty larceny and wholesale fraud than any other form of sin. There is no more insidious evil sapping away the integrity and uprightness of the nations of the earth to-day than this lust for possession without toil, which lies at the root of all gambling. It behoves all lovers of God and men, resolutely and without apology, to thunder the words of the eighth commandment in the ears of all gamblers, whether their practices are gilded by the glory of a court, or tarnished by the vulgarity of a slum. The gambler, whether he wear the purple, broadcloth, or corduroy, is a thief in the sight of God, and ought, therefore, to be so in the sight of all honest men.

The commandment is, moreover, violated by all such as enrich themselves by means that rob their fellowmen of the inalienable rights of human beings. The wealth that is tarnished by a death-rate higher than is necessary is ill-gotten gains, and they who spend their days in the enjoyment of such wealth are branded in the light of the perfect law of God as thieves—thieves

indeed, by the side of whom Bill Sykes, the burglar, is a hero, for in the prosecution of his unlawful practices he risks his life; but these men risk nothing but the lives of their fellow-creatures.

The commandment is broken again and again every day within the great realm of capital and labor. How often to-day might the words of James be quoted with advantage: "Behold, the hire of the laborers . . . which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out; and the cries . . . have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." It is lamentable, but equally true, that many a working man robs his master in that he withholds his fair share of honest labor, while he takes his wage. To capital and labor the eighth commandment has a double message. First, a fair day's wage for a fair day's work; and, secondly, a fair day's work for a fair day's wage.

Principles apply to individuals and to nations with equal force. This being so, this eighth word of the Decalogue is a severe denunciation of the false imperialism which is growingly manifest through all the nations of the world. Strong peoples have, without cause, stolen the land of the weaker. Weak nations have been handed over to the control of new powers without reference to their own rights, and to the wrong of those so dealt with. It would be a humiliating business for men of many countries to quietly sit down, and examine the history of their own nation in the light of this great word.

Those who pray "Thy kingdom come" should consistently act in the light of this commandment by rec-

ognizing the right every man has to the things bestowed upon him as gifts, and those which he has earned by toil, and should have no complicity with any form of violating this principle of morality. The communion of the Church is that of love, not of theft, and within the borders of the kingdom the command is as binding as ever—"Thou shalt not steal."

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."
EXODUS XX. 16.

THIS commandment has a two-fold intention. First, it guards the reputation; and, secondly, it closes the door of opportunity against unworthy men, who might seek to enter therein upon false testimony. Reputation is of great value to those who desire to dwell in the government of God. Such have seen the true nature of things, and have discovered that the only shame that can ever come to man is the shame of sin. Men outside the Divine government are ashamed of what they speak of as failure, are ashamed, moreover, of poverty. To be little and unknown, or to be poor, fills the heart of the average man of the world with terror and foreboding. To those who walk in the light of the Divine thought, to be little and unknown may be a part of that Divine purpose, which ever moves toward glorious consummation; and to be poor may be a part of the condition of being rich toward God.

To all such the only thing to be feared is sin, and a reputation unsmirched by evil is a most precious possession. In the last analysis it really matters nothing what others may think of a man. To be right with God depends upon character, and character is not affected by reputation. Character is the engraving upon the being of a man, of the true facts concerning himself. Reputation is the estimate which others form of him. The latter should ever be dependent upon the former. That it is not so is due to the false ideals men have of success and of greatness; to the shallowness of the popular estimate of sin; and to the contempt of the worldly for rightness. Many whom the world has condemned have passed stainless into the Divine presence.

May it not be reverently said that the Perfect One is the supreme example of this truth? Looking at Him and His career from the purely human side, He lost His life through the sin against which this commandment is directed—that, namely, of false witness. For the comfort of those whose reputation has been assailed, let it ever be remembered that "He was despised and rejected of men"; and, moreover, that He said, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." Yet God does care for the reputation of His own. In the end He will vindicate them. For the passing hour He guards their reputation by this stern and unbending requirement, and those who love His law will ever remember this word, and refuse to rob any man of his acquired right of reputation.

The commandment has also the other effect, that of guarding the righteous from the evils resulting from receiving unworthy men upon false testimony. The man who willingly gives a rogue an entrance to some position on a false statement of character shares his roguery, and wrongs those upon whom the evil man is imposed. It is not necessary to stay to consider the subtle and far-reaching power of thought when expressed in speech. The words of James occur naturally in this connection, "And the tongue is a fire; the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell." More harm has been wrought in human society by false testimony than can ever be stated or fully understood. Hence it is of great importance to carefully examine this ninth word of the Decalogue; and this will be done by noticing, first, the simple intention of the command; secondly, how the command may be violated; and, thirdly, its application to present-day questions.

I.—*The Simple Intention of the Command.*

The words "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" demand truth in the statement, directly or indirectly, made by man, to man, concerning man. As the third commandment forbade the taking of the name of God in vain, and so conditioned the relation of man to God in sincerity and truth; so the ninth reveals the fact that man in his relation to his fellow is to be actuated by the same principles, and proceed on the same lines. God ever deals with man upon

the basis of His full and accurate knowledge of what man is. The Divine attitude towards man, and dealings with man, are not governed by the appearances which man desires to keep up before his fellows, nor by the opinion formed of him by his neighbors. No truer or more weighty words were ever spoken than those in which the Psalmist describes the Divine knowledge in Psalm cxxxix.: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off."

Upon that intimate and absolute knowledge God bases His dealings with men. Such also is His purpose for man in his relation to his fellow. Human knowledge is of necessity limited, but limited knowledge is true so far as it goes, and the Divine requirement is that every man should sincerely speak of, and deal with, his brother man. The intercourse of men with each other is to depend upon actual facts of character, conduct, and capability. The whole social fabric is based upon testimony that one bears to another, and in order that that fabric may be established in truth and righteousness, such testimony is to be true. No man must be helped or harmed by statements made concerning him, which are not exactly in accordance with the facts as far as they are known. Beyond knowledge, therefore, no testimony may be borne, and in the giving of testimony, no facts are to be withheld that would alter the decision. In order that men may approximate in their dealings with each other, to the same law of rectitude which characterizes the Divine dealing with them, the opinions which one man produces in the mind

of a second concerning the character of a third are to be simple, exact, true.

II.—*How the Commandment May Be Violated.*

The first and simplest application of the commandment is to evidence given in courts of justice. The very name just used indicates the true function of such courts. They are tribunals for the execution of justice. Justice is based upon truth, and any false testimony borne is a violation of truth and produces a miscarriage of justice. For this reason, therefore, perjury is made a criminal offence, and rightly so, because through perjury other forms of crime may go unpunished, and the innocent be made to suffer. To stay here, however, would be to rob the commandment of more than half its force, and because the majority of men may never have had to give evidence in a court of human law, and yet are daily in danger of breaking this word of the Divine law, they should carefully examine the sevenfold way in which false witness may be borne.

The most bare and unblushing form of the sin is, of course, that of slander, the lie invented and distributed with malicious intention. Perhaps no form of injury done by man to man is more despicable than this. The person who makes use of it is one compared with whom the highway man is a gentleman, and the assassin almost kind. The highwayman robs of material things that have been gained, and may be replaced. The assassin ends the life by swift or sudden stroke, often with little pain; but the slanderer who invents a lie, and uses it, forms a weapon which takes away a reputa-

tion, and all the chances are against its ever being regained; and thus oftentimes causes untold and prolonged suffering to the innocent, while, in the majority of cases, he himself goes undiscovered and unpunished.

Again, false witness is borne by tale-bearing, that is, by repetition of some report without careful investigation. It is a very great question whether the law of libel is not based on righteousness when it provides that not even the truth is to be circulated to the detriment of any person. This, at any rate, is certain, that to repeat a story, if it reflects upon the honor or character of any man, without the most careful inquiry, is to violate the commandment. This is certainly one of the most common forms in which it is done, and the tale-bearer perpetually excuses the action by saying that there was no intention to deceive, and the rumor was believed to be correct. This, however, is no justification. It is of the essence of wickedness to speak of a neighbor in such a way as is likely to work harm, unless the statements made are the statements of simple and actual fact. There are persons who seem to revel in this form of lawlessness, delighting in the very havoc wrought by the tales they tell.

False witness is also borne when a false impression is made upon the minds of certain persons about others, by a hint, a suggestion, or even the adroit asking of a question. Stigma has been cast upon many a fair reputation by such a question as, "Have you heard about Mr. ——?" The answer being given in the negative, the questioner says, "Ah, well, the least said soonest mended." Nothing further can be drawn from him,

but an unfavorable impression has been created, and the innuendo has had all the deceiving effect of false witness.

False witness, moreover, may also be borne by silence. When one man utters a calumny upon a second in the hearing of a third, if the third knows the statement to be a calumny, and for some personal reason or dislike, or it may be of fear, remains silent, that person is as guilty of the breach of the law as is the one uttering the calumny.

Then again, the imputation of motive is a prolific source of evil. Some deed done, or some gift bestowed, is called in question, not because they in themselves are wrong, but because it is hinted there was a reason for doing this other than that appearing—an ulterior, selfish, sordid motive. Some sentences that mark the methods of imputed motives are so commonly in use that to mention them is to reveal how prevalent is this form of the sin. "Ah, yes; he knows what he is doing." "The gift was only a sprat to catch a mackerel." "He knows which side his bread is buttered on."

Flattery is also a form of the same sin. To say to another man concerning him things which are not believed to be true, which, indeed, are known to be untrue, simply for the sake of pleasing him, and paying tribute to his vanity, is to perjure the soul, and may be to imperil his safety. In the same way, to utter unwarranted praise, to give a testimonial of character, or to recommend a man simply out of friendship for him, while he is known to be unworthy of the testimony borne, is to inflict injury upon the person to whom he is thus recommended.

Thus it will be seen how subtle a danger this of false witness is, how easily and almost imperceptibly, impressions of other people which are untrue may be created. There is no word of the Decalogue more often and unconsciously broken than this ninth commandment, and men need perpetually and persistently to pray,

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

III.—*Application to Present-Day Questions.*

The sin of bearing false witness is terribly prevalent among individuals to-day. It would be a somewhat startling revelation if records could be taken of all the conversations at afternoon teas, Dorcas meetings, and all those institutions at which women do congregate. There is no doubt that men are also guilty of much wrong-doing in this way, but it seems a peculiarly favorite form of iniquity among women. The habit of talking of other people, discussing their affairs, is a most pernicious one, filled with peril to those who do it, and to those of whom they speak. It is largely indulged in through want of better occupation and lack of mental culture, with its accompaniment of conversational power. It is spoken of often as a harmless vice, the only truth in that statement being that it is vice—harmless it by no means is.

A whisper broke the air,
A soft light tone, and low,
Yet barbed with shame and woe;
Now, might it only perish there,
Nor further go!

Ah me! a quick and eager ear
Caught up the little-meaning sound;
Another voice has breathed it clear,
And so it wandered round,
From ear to lip, from lip to ear,
Until it reached a gentle heart,
And that—it broke.

There is also abroad to-day a great deal of false charity, which always works larger harm in the end. When out of pity for the present necessity of an incompetent man, he is recommended to a position for which he is not fitted, his final failure is made surer, and harm is wrought in the work committed to his trust. This is done in commercial, literary, political, and religious life.

Nations and societies as well as individuals, may be guilty of the sin of false witness. It seems to-day the perpetual habit of certain sections of the press to impute motives to foreign nations, and for politicians to heap contumely and abuse on their opponents. Half the unrest in Europe may be said to be due to false witness borne by one nation against another through the press. It might be a good thing if many of our politicians and pressmen could for one brief half-hour divest themselves of their critical capacity, and read without prejudice an article of Marie Corelli's which appeared in the pages of *The Free Lance,* entitled "Manners, Gentlemen."

The air is full of suspicion, and while the old methods of persecution by imprisonment and torture have passed, martyrs are still being made by the process of false witness borne, while all the while the thunder of the Divine fiat sounds over the age, "Thou shalt not

bear false witness against thy neighbor," and the Master's words are still found in His manifesto of the kingdom of heaven, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Every violation of truth is a desecration of the Decalogue, and there is no meaner form of rebellion against God and harming one's fellow-men than that of creating impressions which are not true in the minds of others. He that breaks this command is at once a thief, a coward, and a liar—a liar, because false witness is the opposite of truth; a coward, because a lie once started on its way, is never finally overtaken, and he who thus aims at the heart of his fellow-man gives him no chance of correction; a thief, for as Shakespeare says:

> Who steals my purse steals trash:
> . . . . . .
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not enriches him
> And makes me poor indeed.

The corrective is, of course, in the cession of the being to Him Who is at once the embodiment of truth and incarnate love. Where He reigns the motive is love, and love ever expresses itself in truth.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."—EXODUS XX. 17.

This tenth and last word of the Decalogue is in some sense radically different from those that have preceded it. It is the last requirement of the second table, and most distinctly refers primarily to man's relation to man. All the former commandments have forbidden overt acts. To disobey any of these is sooner or later to be detected by one's fellow-men. This final word utters its solemn warning against sin in the inner and hidden life. This commandment may be broken without the knowledge of any human being. Sooner or later this also will reveal itself in some overt act, and therein lies at once the importance of the commandment, and the consequent solemn responsibility resting upon those who are thus finally warned of danger in its distant places. In English law the overt act of treason is distinguished from design not carried into effect. Yet were there no design there would be no treasonable act. The peculiar nature of this command, therefore, is that it passes below the externals of conduct to the hidden activities of the mind and heart and will, setting up the kingship of God, in all that strange and mystic region of human life. Thus, while the tenth commandment distinctly deals with human inter-relation, it sets such inter-relation in its right relation to Divine supremacy. This truth will be more

evident as the command is considered—first, in itself; secondly, in the light of New Testament teaching; and thirdly, in its application to the conditions of today.

I.—*The Command.*

In examining the commandment itself it is well to notice carefully the word which is made use of to mark the sin. The actual word "covet," in its original meaning, implies delight in some object, and because delight in anything necessarily means a sense of desire to possess, the word was used to mark that desire to possess, more than the delight which prompted the desire. In the repetition of the commandment as chronicled in the Book of Deuteronomy (v. 21) two words are used. The first word translated "covet" in the Revised is the same as that already referred to in Exodus. The second word translated "desire" in the Revised is a word meaning simply to wish for. The Apostle Paul in quoting the commandment uses a Greek word, which in its different forms in the New Testament is most frequently translated "lust." It is often rendered "desire," and sometimes "covet," and occasionally "concupiscence." These translations will help to throw light upon the word. Its essential meaning is "to set the heart on," very literally, "to pant after."

The sin, therefore, suggested by the word is very evidently that of desire to possess something which belongs to another. Notice the sequence suggested by the very word itself. The eyes rest upon some object which commands the admiration of the beholder; something which is to that person delightful and to be desired. To desire to possess that object is to covet. There is,

of course, an unnamed quantity in the circumstances addressed, something which is not wrong, but out of which the wrong may spring. That unnamed quantity is comparative poverty, inability to obtain a like object to the one admired by lawful means. That condition may give rise to a desire to possess the object when not lawfully obtainable. That desire is the sin of coveting. By way of illustration, a person may see a picture upon the walls of his friend's house, admire it, desire it and then purchase one like it. The desire in that case is not the sin of coveting, for it may be satisfied legitimately. Where the object admired is for any reason out of the reach of the one admiring, admiration merging into desire to possess breaks the commandment. Herein lies the searching and revealing power of this last word of the Decalogue. This desire for that which cannot lawfully be possessed is distinctly forbidden, and so this tenth word passes much deeper in its moral requirement than any that has preceded it. It sets up God's right over the realm of desire.

The whole force of the commandment lies in these words taken out of the commandment. *"Thy neighbor's. . . thy neighbor's. . . his. . . his. . . his. . . his. . . thy neighbor's."* This is a sevenfold guarding of the interests of another. It is not wrong to desire a wife, nor a man servant, nor a maid servant, nor an ox, nor an ass, nor anything that in itself is right. It is wrong to desire any of these when through any circumstances they are out of the reach of the one desiring.

This examination of the commandment in itself is enough to arrest the conscience and to bring man to say it is impossible to prevent desire following upon admiration; and this is indeed true, but this truth is the revelation of the fallen condition of humanity, and this is what the apostle meant when, in his great argument on the relation of the law to sin, he said, "I had not known sin except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting, for apart from the law sin is dead." That sin is present in every life is evidenced by this very desire to possess unreachable things. This sin is only discovered in the light of this commandment. Well will it be, if this searchlight of Divine requirement shall so astonish men as to drive them to Him Who alone is able to deal with the unexplored reaches of the nature, and then will they also be able to say, "The law hath been our tutor unto Christ."

The value and importance of the commandment will be gathered from a consideration of its far-reaching application. First, it conditions individual life. Covetousness disturbs all the highest possibilities of life, and finally makes them impossible. These highest possibilities are indicated in the apostle's arrangement of the fruit of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Covetousness will destroy the bloom and mar the beauty of all the fair cluster. Instead of love, there will be suspicion and hatred;

instead of joy, sorrow, heart-ache; instead of peace, feverish unrest; instead of long-suffering, impatience; instead of kindness, cruelty; instead of goodness, miserliness; instead of faithfulness, infidelity; instead of meekness, arrogance; instead of self-control, self-assurance. The apostle's phrase, "The goodness and severity of God," was no accidental combination of apparent opposites. The severity of the tenth word of the Decalogue is based upon His goodness. Though it search like fire, it is in order that beyond the fire cleansing of the soil, there may come the verdure and fruitage of Paradise, in order that "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree."

Secondly, it includes in its scope all social life. Out of disobedience to this command will spring sins that break every law written upon the second Table of the Law. It is the sin of covetousness that makes it possible for a man to say, "It is Corban," of possessions he should use in honoring his father and his mother. Criminal records will prove that in a great majority of cases, unholy desire was the inspiration of murder. No word need be written to demonstrate the fact that the look of concupiscence ever precedes the act of adultery. Theft of every description is the offspring of desire to possess that which is unreachable by lawful means. The evil spirit that makes false witness possible is motived far more often than perhaps appears by covetous aspiration. Thus the whole realm of human inter-relation is disorganized and broken up by the dishonoring of the tenth commandment.

And yet again, it is a command that conditions the Divine relationship. The sin of covetousness proves that the soul is out of harmony with God, and dissatisfied with Him. This sin issues, therefore, in the breaking of the four commandments of the first Table of the Decalogue. It is for the accommodation of distorted human life that man has created other gods, themselves covetous and selfish. Unsatisfied desire, moreover, issues in the attempt to make some representation of God, for the easing of conscience which perpetually cries out for the authority of Deity. Profanity and blasphemy of all kinds result from the pain of a hunger that finds no satisfaction in the false gods thus set up. All profanity is the wail of lust. The desecration of the day of rest is due to the restlessness born of unholy desire. It will thus be seen how far-reaching and searching is this closing word of the Divine enunciation of morality. The first commandment and the last are closely linked, and all that lie between are conditioned within them. If a man have no God but Jehovah Elohim, then will he covet nothing, save what his God supplies. If a man covet anything that he may not lawfully obtain, it is because of hunger deeper than that born in the coveting, his hunger, namely, for the one true God.

II.—*The Teaching of the New Testament.*

Turning now to the New Testament, nothing can be clearer or more emphatic than its repetition and enforcement of the great principles of this commandment. The words of Jesus Himself admit of no misunderstanding. They were spoken in answer to a man

who asked the Master to satisfy his desire by compelling his brother to divide the inheritance with him. "Take heed and *keep yourselves from all covetousness,* for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This statement He enforced by the parable of the rich fool, who, notwithstanding all his getting, found no present rest, and yet with acumen and concentration attempted to feed his soul with "goods," imagining that the spirit-life could be satisfied with eating, drinking, and merriment.

So also Paul ranks *"the covetous man"* with the "fornicator," the "unclean person," the "idolater," and declares that he has no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Eph. v. 4-5.)

James, in his satire of the rich, that is, of men who have attempted to satisfy their life by possessing, and whose whole activity has been actuated by desire for gold, shows clearly the heinousness of the sin, and reveals how it issues in the breaking down of the social ideal. (James v. 1-6.)

Peter tracks adultery to the same cause in his burning words, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin: enticing unsteadfast souls: *having the heart exercised in covetousness."* (2 Peter ii:14.)

John declares in a comprehensive sentence the perishing nature and cause of sinful life, placing it in immediate antithesis to the permanence and cause of holy life. "The world passeth away, and the *lust* thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii:17.)

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, in his concluding portion, warns those to whom he writes against

the same sin, putting covetousness and content into opposition, and showing how the first is rendered impossible, and the second made simple, to those who rest in the faithfulness and fellowship of God. "Be ye free *from the love of money;* content with such things as ye have, for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb. xiii:5-6.)

To return to the teaching of Jesus, a striking and forceful statement of the principle is contained in the remarkable words, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt. vi:25). He made this statement after warning His disciples against laying up treasures for themselves upon the earth. He followed it by declaring that they were not to be anxious concerning the things they should eat, or drink, or put on. They were rather "to seek first the kingdom of God." The sentence itself is most suggestive, as putting into contrast the two camps in which men serve—God and Mammon. The inspiration and force of service in the camp of God is that of rest and satisfaction. The stimulus and spur of service in the camp of Mammon is that of desire and covetousness. Man serves God in the quiet force of his rest in God. Man serves Mammon in the restless energy of his desire for Mammon. Herein lies the most terrible indictment of covetousness. It is the fever which makes the eye glisten with a false luster, the cheek flush with deceitful color, the muscles twitch with unnatural activity, the nerves throb with restless desire. It is the service whose final wage is death.

Wherever man desires anything, small or great, outside the possibility of righteousness, he is in that measure in the grip of a fever which must destroy him unless it be quenched.

III.—*The Application.*

Was there ever a day in which this great principle needed more forceful statement than to-day? Is it too much to say that covetousness lies at the root of all the evils that blight the world, especially its so-called civilized portion? The oppression of feeble races, the inability to cope with the outbreak of savagery, the indifference to righteousness that alone exalts a nation, the toleration of giant evils that sap the virtue of the people—these all may be traced to the restless and unsatisfied heart of man in his covetousness for that which, possessed, does but breed new desire. Some great words are being dragged through the mire, because they are chained to the car of the unsatisfied god, covetousness. In Mr. Watts's famous picture of Mammon, a terrible indictment, he has portrayed the monster as of enormous proportions, bloated, and apparently comfortable in his swinish overfulness. While I admit the force of the picture, had I the artist's brush I would not so paint him, but rather lean and gaunt, hungry and wild, with one arm clasping the nations, and the other out-reached, with fury on his face that there was no more to possess.

Not only in the national outlook is covetousness discovered, but at the base of all social problems lies the same worm of discontent. The greed of the capitalist and the madness of the anarchist, the brutality of great

corporations and the superb cruelty of un-Christianized democracy, all arise from lust of possession. All the individual vices that are robbing the nations of their young men and maidens—drink, impurity, gambling—grow out of unsatisfied craving of the heart—covetousness. Humanity, away from God, covets, and no amount of getting proves to be gain.

Oh, that the words of Eliphaz the Temanite—true in principle, though wrong in their application to Job—might be sounded out in some such way as to convince belief and produce obedience.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace:
Thereby good shall come unto thee.
Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth,
And lay up His words in thine heart.
If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up;
If thou put away righteousness far from thy tents.
And lay thou thy treasure in the dust,
And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks;
And the Almighty shall be thy treasure, and precious silver unto thee.
For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty,
And shalt lift up thy face unto God.
Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee;
And thou shalt pay thy vows.
Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee,
And light shall shine upon thy ways." (Job xxii. 21-28.)

Surely this last word of the Decalogue must bring every soul who honestly faces it into the place of conviction of sin, and to a sense of utter helplessness. It may be men have passed through the examination of all the foregoing commandments with some measure of self-respect still left, with some consciousness that

they have not greatly sinned; but who at the last can stand in the light of this quick and powerful word, and claim to be guiltless? It was Paul who after thirty years of Christian experience, reviewing his old life as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, could say, "as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless," who yet had to say that when he faced this last word, "Thou shalt not covet," he became conscious that sin wrought in him "all manner of coveting;" and he found that the commandment which was unto life, was in him unto death. Very few dare look back upon the past and say even in the light of the earlier commandments conditioning the externals of life, that they have been "blameless," not one dare say they have not desired forbidden things.

The study of the Decalogue must therefore be closed with a confession of hopelessness. In it there is found the law of life, but not life. We are undone. It may be possible for men so to live as to escape the detection of their fellow men, but when God speaks to them in the secret stillness of the inner chamber of their being the arresting word, "Thou shalt not covet;" and when Jesus adds to that His word of exposition, "Every one that looketh..hath..already in his heart," they bow their heads in the dust, and say "We also have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Thus the commandments bring men into the light of Divine requirement, and draw from them the confession of guilt, and leave them waiting for the Deliverer. The commandments without the Cross utter a sentence of death.

A NEW COMMANDMENT.

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."—JOHN XIII, 34, 35.

In considering the Ten Commandments it has been seen how the ethic of Jesus magnified the law as given by Moses. Nothing therein minimized the value, or lowered the standard, of the Decalogue. He distinctly declared this to be the case when He said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." Both in His life and teaching, He fulfilled the law; that is, He filled it to the full, passing in deed and word, beyond the mere letter, into the region of spiritual intention. Those who had known Him as Teacher could never charge Him with having substituted the traditions of men for the commandment of God, or say that He had so explained the commandments as to make them simple and easy. His kingly words had searched the realm of motive, and had spoken in authority as to the vital importance of character.

He uttered this new commandment when He was about to leave His disciples. "Knowing that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii: 1). These words declare the principle underlying His life. It was that of love. In the impulse of that love He girded Himself and washed the feet of the disciples

thus giving expression to the supreme truth He had come to teach men, that where love is the motive of life, service is its expression.

He then commenced His final teaching, and in this connection enunciated the new commandment which revealed the purpose of the whole economy of grace. In Him grace had its epiphany, and in him grace finally accomplished its greatest work, not for the setting aside of law, but in order that all the requirements of law may be met in activities of life which spring from the impulse of love.

There is a sense in which the commandment is not new. "Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again, a new commandment write I unto you which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth" (1 John 11:7-8). The commandment was old. Christ had already summarized the law by declaring it to be love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." Moreover, this summary of the law was embodied in the Mosaic economy from which Christ quoted (Deut. vi, 5. Lev. xix, 18).

What, then, is new in this repetition of the old commandment? The answer is given by John in the passage already quoted. That which is new is the light

shed upon the commandment by the life and teaching of Christ; which by the time John wrote, was also shining through the lives of His disciples, so that He was able to say, "A new commandment . . . which is true in Him and in you."

Let consideration be given to this old commandment in its new light. Notice, first, this new commandment as including the old; secondly, the new commandment as revealed in Christianity.

I.—*The New Commandment as including the Old.*

Every breach of the Decalogue is a violation of love. It follows, therefore, if love suggest, control, direct the life, there can be no such breach. With regard to man's relation to man, this is distinctly taught by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another: For he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to its neighbour: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. xiii. 8-10). It is equally true of man's relation to God. Of such importance is the understanding of this simple and sublime principle, that it may be well to recall the whole of the ten words, noticing how love fulfils them.

If man love God in all the breadth and beauty suggested by the words "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," he cannot possibly find room for another God, and so the first word is

kept. If man love God supremely, he will not suffer anything to stand between him and God, thus the graven image is broken to pieces, and swept away by the force of a stronger affection. Out of love will spring that hallowing of the name of God which will dry the springs of blasphemy, and make the double dealing of the hypocrite an impossibility. The Sabbath will be eagerly welcomed, and all its privileges earnestly and gladly appropriated when it is a season in which love may find its way into the attitude of worship, and the acts of service flowing therefrom.

Passing to the second table, and looking now at love in its working towards others, it will at once be seen that the only sufficient power for obedience and honour rendered to parents is that of love. There will be no thought of murder until the awful moment has arrived in which the flame of love has died out upon the altar. Unchastity of every description is love's sure destruction, growing gross upon the very death of that which it so vilely personates. All theft is rendered impossible by true love for one's neighbor. Love sits as a sentinel at the portal of the lips, and arrests the faintest whisper of false witness against a neighbor; nay, rather dwells within the heart, and slays the thought that might have inspired the whisper. It is love and love alone that, finding satisfaction in God, satisfies the heart's hunger, and prevents all coveting.

The new commandment, therefore, which is an expression of the intention of the old, perfectly states the one law that includes the many. If man may but learn to love, he may walk erect in the light of Sinai, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Yet this is but imperfectly to state the fulness of the new law. To love, is to have a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. It is to do more than can be expressed in the letter. Love is the fruitful tree whose branches run over the wall. Love is the impulse which carries deed far beyond duty. Love is lavish, prodigal, imprudent often, to the calculating correctness of the mere literalist. Love will take its precious ointment and pour it without thought of cost as an expression of itself.

To know the value of love as the force which fulfils law, it has to be contrasted with other impulses. Duty will become mechanical, exact, regular. Love will take the second mile, and give the cloak also, the second always including the first, the cloak ever following the coat. Thus, while duty may keep the letter, love will enfold it in an atmosphere that glorifies it. Thus it is that "scarcely for a righteous man will one die: peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." The difference between righteousness and goodness here is that between duty and love.

For the sake of appearances how much will man do? With what regularity all the details of conduct that are watched by the eyes of men will be attended to, lest haply the observer should adversely criticise. Love cares little for appearance, will often startle the mere casual observer by its utter disregard of what the critical may think, if it may but serve the need of some lonely soul, or carry a message of hope into some dark dungeon of despair.

Self-esteem is also a remarkably stern sentinel of words and deeds. To maintain his reputation man will

often suffer much, and yet how often, alas! will he break the law of God under this very impulse. Love has forgotten self, and therefore has no time to waste in maintaining reputation or ministering to personal satisfaction. It thinks of others, serves others, and so fulfils the whole law.

II.—*The New Commandment as Revealed in Christianity.*

From this bare statement of the case there will be no dissent. To perfectly love is to perfectly fulfil the law which was uttered in love. It is at this point that man becomes conscious of his own impotence. Who can love with absolute disinterestedness? It is at this point also that Christianity asserts itself by revealing the love-life in a Person, and communicating that life as a dynamic of love to others.

Jesus of Nazareth was Love Incarnate. His whole existence was the most perfect expression of love that the world has ever had. It was therefore the fulfilling of the law, so that the testimony of God, man, and devils declares His perfection. Thrice the Divine voice broke the usual silence of the heavens, in announcment of the satisfaction of God in the life of Jesus; the Roman Procurator uttered the true sentence, after all evidence had been given, when he said: "I find no fault in Him"; and although He needs no tribute from the under-world of darkness, it is a significant and suggestive fact that a demon said to Him, "I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God." This thrice-attested perfection was the result of His perfect love. He loved God, and proved it by His own uncompromis-

ing loyalty to His will. His love to man was manifest in His attitude toward friends and foes, in the severity of the anger that occasionally flashed forth against tyrants and oppressors; and in the unceasing tenderness of His action toward the oppressed. Whatever question is asked about Christ, the answer is somehow conditioned in love. Ask concerning His character, and answer by describing the characteristics which in their sum total made that character, and every one of them springs from, and the whole of them result in, love. Inquire what was the reason of all He did, or said, and again it will be found that He acted and spoke in the impulse of love. Examine the direction in which His life proceeded, from boyhood to manhood, from the secrecy of the home at Nazareth to the public ways of the Teacher, and ever on to the Cross, and His pathway is the pathway of love. Mark the activity of His life, and never in the records can a deed be discovered save such as are deeds of love. Observe the time of His coming or going, His delays and His hastenings, His retirements and returns to the ways of men. His whole life was a radiant revelation of love itself, and love as the fulfillment of law.

The issue of this life was at once a mystery and revelation of love, crowning all that had gone before. In His death love made atonement for the sin of the loveless. The difference between self-sacrificing love, and self-seeking lust, creates the necessity for atonement in a double sense. "Sin is the transgression of the law," and demands atonement. "Love is the fulfilment of the law," and provides atonement. One of the

first evidences of the principle of sin in the life of man was his selfish attempt to place the blame of wrong upon another. The supreme evidence of the life of love lies in the fact that love takes the blame attached to others. The Cross was the necessary outcome of the perfect love of God as revealed in Christ. "He that knew no sin was made sin." Love, having fulfilled the law, was faultless, but took to itself the fault and guilt of all who through lack of love had broken law. This is the supreme mystery of atonement, not here explained but declared.

Through the mystery of this death, love became dynamic. Herein lies the lonely splendor of Christianity. It was love that was able to say, "I lay down My life, and if I lay it down, I will take it again." Taking it again in the power of resurrection, He henceforth has communicated it to all repentant and believing souls, so that to such it may be said in the words of the apostle, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Thus, love at the center has definite relation to the whole circumference of conduct. Love as the impulse of life produces the activities of love. Love being the supreme reason, all the deductions are also of love. Who shall write anything to describe the love-life after the poem of love from the pen of Paul. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." Within the compass of that marvellous

description, lies the most perfect unfolding of the fulfilment of law by love.

Herein, then, lies the severest test of all profession that it is possible to discover: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now." Every breach of law is due to lack of love, and all hatred in the heart is due either to the absence of the Christ within, or to wilful disobedience to His impulses of love.

It is only at Calvary that man can do without Sinai, for it is only there that all the purposes suggested in the code of the mountain of fire can come within the range of possibility. It is only when His love indwells the spirit, and constrains the heart, that law is fulfilled. Let but Christ reign in the life of man, and thoughts will be born, words will be spoken, and deeds will be done in love. Then in thought and word and deed law will be fulfilled.

It will be profitable to search and try the heart by the new commandment rather than by the old. Let all the deeds of the days be tracked to motive, and every word traced to inspiration, and every thought probed to conception; and if the result of the process be that love is discovered, men may rest content both as to deeds and words and thoughts.

Such searching must result in deep humiliation, but it should also drive the humbled soul into the new life of dependence upon Him Who was, and is, the Eternal Love.

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